EXPERIENCING ŚIVA

ENCOUNTERS WITH A HINDU DEITY

ditors
. Clothey
J. Bruce Long

Even though Siva is one of the oldest continuing deities to have been worshipped in human history, large portions of Saivism's philosophical ~~and~~ and mythic tradition remain untranslated and unexplored. Its ritual life, poetry, symbol systems and mystical heritage have yet to be fully comprehended and so also the process by which Saivism has changed in history, has adapted to cultural and societal factors and has in turn, shaped society, the arts and history.

This book seeks to invite consideration of some of the less explored aspects of Saivism. The essays in the collection are gathered round three themes. The first explores Saiva motifs in literature and thought, especially as these motifs focus on the Saiva religious experience. Practice and worship form the second theme and bring into light the ritual experience in Saivism. The final sub-theme, a microcosm of the underlying concern of the book, looks at Saivism "in process", influencing and interacting with agencies outside itself. More specifically the essays in this section study transitional 'moments' in the Saiva tradition and seek to illustrate an historical process of adaptation and assimilation.

This volume has grown out of a workshop held at the University of Pennyslvania in 1973, sponsored by the Conference of Religion in South India. The contributors include eminent scholars such as V.A. Devasenapathy and Jean Filliozat. It is hoped that this book will make meaningful reading for students of religion, historians and other social scientists interested in acculturation, literature, philosophy, art and society.

Rs. 100

MCLD

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Editors:
Fred W. Clothey
J. Bruce Long

MANOHAR
1983

First Published, 1983

© Fred W. Clothey

Published by
Ramesh Jain
Manohar Publications
2, Ansari Road, Daryaganj
New Delhi 110002

Printed at
Prem Printing Press
257-Golaganj
Lucknow-226018

PREFACE

DESPITE the appearance in recent years of several fine studies, Śaivism remains much less studied and understood in the West than its sister tradition Vaiṣṇavism. Even though Śiva is one of the oldest continuing deities to have been worshipped in human history, large portions of Śaivism's philosophical and mythic tradition remain untranslated and unexplored. Its ritual life, poetry, symbol systems, and mystical heritage have yet to be fully comprehended even by the most sensitive and conscientious of scholars; the processes by which Śaivism has changed in history, has adapted to cultural and societal factors and has, in turn, shaped society, the arts, and history can yet give social scientists and humanists alike insight into the dynamics of religion's persistence and change in the history of man.

The present volume hardly fills all these gaps; it only begins to raise some questions. Yet it does seek to invite consideration of some of the less explored aspects of Śaivism. The volume grew out of a workshop, held at the University of Pennsylvania in 1973, sponsored by the Conference of Religion in South India. The intent of the workshop was at least twofold: 1) to assess what we knew and were learning in the Western scholarly world about Śaivism and about how it has shaped Hindu history and culture and 2) to bring together some of the fresh discoveries and important research being done on Śaivism. This volume is an expression of the sense of delight many of us at that conference felt in the belief that some of our discoveries were exciting and well worth sharing with other interested persons.

This volume affirms the awareness of its contributors—to say nothing of millions of Śiva's devotees—that the worship of Śiva has significantly shaped the literature, thought, culture, and life-style of a large segment of humanity, especially in South and South East Asia. These essays might well have been subtitled *Śaivism in Interface* for their underlying concern is to show how the images, symbols, ritual intentions of Śaivism spill over, influencing not only each other, but virtually the whole range of human expression in those places where Śaivism is found.

This volume then does not generally restate the better known facts about Śaivism which have been made available to us in studies of

its history and thought. Rather, it tries to illustrate Śaivism's diversity, to open less used windows, show varied vignettes, which afford even the specialist on Śaivism some fresh insights on the tradition. But, beyond the specialist, it is hoped that these studies will interest students of religion and of South Asia in general; historians of literature, art and philosophy; and all those social scientists and humanists who are interested in such concerns as acculturation and the relationships between religion and hagiography, literature, art or society.

The essays have been gathered around three themes. The first explores Śaiva motifs in literature and thought, especially as these motifs focus on the Śaiva religious experience. Professor V.A. Devasenapathy of Madras, one of this century's most eminent exponents of Śaiva philosophy, contributes the first essay. Dr. Devasenapathy raises fundamental questions about the human dilemma and its resolution. He presents a case, from within Śaivism, for the Śaiva view of *karma* and grace. Two essays examine fundamental ideas in the poetry of Māṇikkavācakar, a ninth century Tamil Śaiva poet, indeed, one of the most significant poets to express devotion to Śiva in any of the vernacular languages of India. Glenn Yocum of Whittier College explores Māṇikkavācakar's imagery of "madness" and ecstasy as an idiom of the religious experience in Śaivism. Lucetta Mowry, once of Wellesley College, looks at Śaivism's perceptions of the phenomenal world as expressed by Māṇikkavācakar. David Buck explores the unorthodox worship of Śiva by the *cittar*-s (Skt. : *Siddha*-s) a fascinating though still relatively obscure group of medieval Tamil poets, whose devotion is characterized by an asocial life-style and intense meditation.

Practice and especially worship is the second theme of this volume. Professor Jean Filliozat of the College de France in Paris, who has spent a lifetime in the study of the Āgamas, the ritual texts of the Śaiva tradition, provides a brief introduction to the role of the Āgamas in Śaiva ritual and suggests the extent to which the Śaiva Āgamic texts have shaped the culture even of South East Asia, quite beyond the ritual framework itself. J. Bruce Long of the Blaisdell Institute examines the *Śatarudrīya stotram*, a significant Vedic hymn to Rudra, arguing that the hymn serves as a paradigm of the religious experience throughout Śaivism. William Curtis, an architect at the University of Washington, examines the symbolism of ritual space in Śaivism, exploring how textual injunction and contemporary practice

correlate. Fred Clothey interprets a fire ritual conducted in a contemporary Śaiva temple in such a way as to show how the symbolism of archaic systems are aesthetically and dramatically re-enacted to speak to contemporary religious and psychic needs.

The final sub-theme, a microcosm of the underlying concern of the whole volume, looks at Śaivism "in process", influencing and interacting with agencies outside itself. David Lorenzen of El Colegio de Mexico shows how Śaiva myth comes to be applied to the biography of India's great philosopher, Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara's hagiography reflects the dialectic between myth and history, faith and fact, Śiva and Viṣṇu. Charles Ryerson shows how Śaivism is adapted and reformulated in the context of the socio-political matrix of contemporary Tamil India by examining the religious perceptions of the remarkable, if unorthodox, contemporary swami known as Kuṉrakkuṭi Aṭikal. Finally, Donald Swearer of Swarthmore College looks at some aspects of Śaivism's interaction with Buddhism in Thailand. As well as any, his essay, "Lingam and Lotus..." expresses the conviction of the contributors that Śaivism's pervasive presence has been a significant factor in the shaping of many facets of the human enterprise in South and South East Asia.

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PART I

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN ŚAIVA THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

THE first part of this volume deals with aspects of the "mythos" or belief system of Śaivism. More specifically, these essays focus on the religious experience, each touching, in its own way, on the *summum bonum* of Śaiva life—the relationship with Śiva. The essays explore the implications of that relationship for the devotee's perceptions not only of the experience itself but also of the fundamental concepts of *karma* and grace, of the nature of man, and of the universe in which man is set.

V. A. Devasenapathy argues as a thoughtful advocate of the Śaiva tradition that *karma* is both an opportunity and a problem. *Karma* does not imply blind fate and determinism. It is not an excuse for refraining from the doing of good or for aiding another. Rather, true morality is the doing of good for its own sake, not for the sake of reward or for fear of punishment. Only by such "morality" is the person in a position to have egoism removed. God—Śiva—is the Moral Governor who apportions consequences of deeds to their respective agents, much as a father may deal with a child, a physician may prescribe specific remedies on the basis of certain diagnoses, or a king may maintain justice in his realm. God is the moral educator who teaches persons that the norm of morality is love (*aṉpu*).

Humans learn to love as the result of the grace (*aruḷ*) of God, because God is love. Grace is ready to forgive, suffer, and serve. Grace is a free gift which renders *karma* inoperative. Only when one is surrendered to the lord does one become permeated with love.

Professor Devasenapathy's essay is a contemporary restatement of the classical position of Śaiva Siddhānta. Among other things, the tradition maintains that the soul (*pacu*) assumes the quality of that to which it adheres. Its freedom from *karma* and other bonds (*mala*-s) and its capacity for love and morality are in direct proportion to its capacity to cling to the lord (*pati*) from whom it receives its "moral" nature.

Glenn Yocum describes the religious experience itself as that experience is discussed by the significant Tamil poet Māṇikkavācakar. The religious experience in Śaivism is called "madness" (*piccu, pittu,*

unmattam) in the poetry of Māṇikkavācakar. That is, there is unspeakable bliss and hysteria, a sense of being possessed by the God who himself is described as "mad"—for he engages in acts which transcend social norms. To be related to the deity is to be possessed by the deity; it is to transcend social conventions. Old ties, such as to family and caste, are replaced by new ties to Śiva's devotees. The experience of God results in a state of spontaneity, social freedom, and community.

Yocum speculates that Māṇikkavācakar's perception may be informed by earlier aspects of Tamil religion: for example, the possession and dancing (*veriyāṭal*) associated with members of the Murukan cult, the *guru-śiṣya* relationship, and the lover-beloved model. Other images than "madness" are used to speak of the religious experience by later bhaktas. For example, Aruṇakiri in the fifteenth century stresses the imagery of quiescence or "soundless space". Even so, the paradigm of "madness" is normative for many bhaktas in both Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism from the Tamil Appar to the Bengali Caitanya. Māṇikkavācakar thus gives us considerable insight into the nature of the bhakti experience, not only in Śaivism but throughout the Hindu tradition.

Lucetta Mowry explores the Śaiva interpretation of the phenomenal world and, like Yocum, finds in Māṇikkavācakar, a significant model. Prior to the ninth century there were several perceptions of the phenomenal world operative in Tamil country, Mowry suggests. There were the "philosophical" such as were expressed in the monism of Advaita and the dualism of Saṁkhya. There were the "mythological" as developed in the Purāṇas; and there were the "aesthetic", such as could be found in the earlier Tamil *Caṅkam* literature in which five metaphorical tracts of land (*tiṇai*-s) were described and celebrated.

Māṇikkavācakar uses these perceptions selectively in his understanding of the phenomenal world, Mowry argues. The poet, on the one hand, delights in the sounds and images of life and the land; yet, on the other hand, he describes both body and world in negative terms. How is this double vision reconciled? Śiva's presence is that which valorizes the world and makes it pleasant. Śiva liberates man from the *mala*-s (bonds); the world then can be viewed with a new perspective. Śiva is the world and its energizer; he is the one and the many. He pervades all phenomena and endows them with their essence.

For Māṇikkavācakar Śiva's relationship to the world is expressed in part in his relationship to Pārvatī. She is model woman and model devotee, but there is also intimation of a sense of her being Śiva's Śakti as energizing principle in relation to the world. This is a theme elaborated later in Meykaṇṭa and other Siddhāntins.

Māṇikkavācakar believes Śiva's functions towards the world to be more comprehensive than those of Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other deities. His view of the world is that of a mystic; it is affirmed because of Śiva's presence. Hence there is an implicit rejection of Śaṅkara's view of the world. Professor Mowry suggests that while Māṇikkavācakar's view of the world was still not systematic and retains a certain ambivalence, later Siddhāntins seek to reconcile Māṇikkavācakar's vision with a selective adaptation of Saṁkhyan dualism. Once again, and in another way, Māṇikkavācakar is depicted as the "father" of Śaiva philosophy.

David Buck explores some aspects of the complex and still unfamiliar terrain of Siddha Siddhānta as it compares with themore "orthodox" Śaiva Siddhānta in "medieval" Tamil life. More particularly, he examines their relative perceptions of the religious experience.

The *Siddhas* (Tam. *Cittar*-s) share certain views with Śaiva Siddhāntins. They share a belief in Śiva and in the soul (*pacu*). They have a similar ambivalence to the world: the world is bondage, even "filthy", in *Cittar* terminology, yet it is the expression of God's love for souls.

Yet the *Cittar*-s tend to be less "metaphysical" than their Śaiva counterparts. The *Cittar*-s are more apt to speak of the ultimate "meditative space" as within and in less cosmic terms than those with which the "inner space" of Śaivism is described. The body serves as a metaphor for the locus of existence in final release. This is not to say that "immortality" is physical for the *Cittar*-s; it is in fact other than physical, but the *Cittar* poets are generally less precise about the locus of the ultimate state than the Śaivas who speak explicitly of an immortality not bound by the body. Further, for *Cittar*-s individual effort is stressed as a means to attain immortality while grace (*aruḷ*) is secondary. For Śaivas, the reverse is true.

There are other ways in which the *Cittar* emphasis on the individual rather than the cosmic is stressed. Most striking, perhaps, is the tendency of the *Cittar*-s to speak of their ability to bring about "new creations" that make them greater than the creator god, Brahmā,

and equal to the Lord himself. *Cittar*-s tend to renounce outward forms of worship more willingly than Śaivas and use abstruse metaphors that carry emotional force and sacralize their own persons rather than indulge in metaphysical speculation and theological specificity.

The religious experience—and discussion of it—is central to Śaivism's self-definition. Relationship to Śiva is seen not only as the best way to know truth but also informs the thoughtful devotee's perceptions of other aspects of truth. In the prism of religious experience and its articulation are reflected perceptions of the world and of the self, and of the problems and possibilities inherent in each. On the one hand, there is impatience with the body; on the other, the body is a metaphor of the divine presence. Here, there is repugnance for a world which crowds out ultimate values; there is delight in the world and celebration at the phenomenon of birth, especially insofar as the Lord's presence gives to the world new significance. Themes, ambiguous in themselves, intersect with their apparent opposites: *karma*—grace; convention and its transcendence in the ecstasy of "madness"; nature-spirit; phenomena and noumena; reason and experience. The essays that follow give some insight into this belief system, and the ways in which it is oriented by the special character of the Śaiva religious experience.

1

KARMA AND GRACE IN ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

V.A. Devasenapathy

STATED in very broad terms, this essay addresses the problem of morality and Divine Grace. In the context of Hinduism in general and of *Śaiva Siddhānta* in particular, the problem is how to reconcile *karma* (*iṟuviṉai*, in Tamil) with Divine Grace. *Karma* relates to re-birth. Hence the discussion must include ideas about re-birth as well.

Why should we accept *karma*? Is it not enough to accept human effort as a principle of explanation for our pleasures and pains? If a man works hard, he earns what is necessary for his enjoyment. Likewise, lack of effort or laziness leaves him without the means for enjoyment: This sounds all right. But the Siddhāntin asks the question: 'What about those who put forth enormous effort and get little or nothing therefrom or even lose whatever they started with? Contrariwise, what about those who come into a fortune without making any effort therefor?' Now, these questions are *not* posed to belittle effort and encourage laziness. They are raised to make us think more deeply. In fact, the effort theory is enlarged so as to include efforts in previous lives and to show their importance for future lives. Striving or endeavour is a process continued from the past and flowing on to the future through the present. So, if anything, the notion of *karma* emphasizes endeavour and does not underestimate it. There are also two other matters to be noticed in this connection: one ought not to blame God for his woes and misfortunes; at the same time, one should not criticise his fellowmen for his troubles. Thus, by emphasizing *karma*, the individual is made to feel responsible himself for what he suffers or for what he enjoys. He should not, however, get depressed when he suffers or become elated when pleasures fall his way.

What is *karma*? *Karma* is action. Action here is understood in terms of one's thoughts, words and deeds. These are considered to be good or bad depending on whether they promote or hinder the welfare of others. They are said to be *hita* or *ahita* in so far as they strengthen or fail to strengthen souls. The question is whether the

strengthening is of one's own soul or of other souls. Reflection makes it clear that if we do good *karma* or refrain from evil *karma* only considering our own advancement, such *karma*, instead of weakening egoism, strengthens it and thus becomes harmful. So *karma* should be performed directly for the welfare of others and only incidentally for one's own.

Evil deeds are of two kinds, those which are positively harmful—sins of commission, so to say—and those which have accrued from failure to do good deeds. It is important to consider the latter kind to clear up a misunderstanding. The suffering of a soul is likely to be the result of its *prārabdhakarma—karma* which has started fructifying and which cannot be arrested. One might think that by attempting to relieve such suffering one is only preventing the soul's *karma* from being wiped out by living down the evil consequences of its own past. Such a view is mistaken—(1) in assuming all suffering to be evil and (2) in not recognising the paramount duty to do good always. Suffering voluntarily endured for the sake of others is not an evil but has creative moral worth. Anyone who suffers for others or takes upon himself their burdens is most like unto God Himself—the blue-throated Śiva who drank poison to prevent it from destroying the whole universe. One's duty is, in all cases, to try to help others and relieve them of their suffering. To say that they suffer because of their past *karma* is to claim to know their past. When one has done everything possible and the efforts have been unavailing, failure, at this stage, may be surmised to be due to *prārabdha*. The thought of *prārabdha* should never arise when we see suffering; if there is a place for it, it should be only at the end when our efforts have failed irretrievably—in order to reconcile us to the inevitable. Even in such cases, the efforts are twice blessed—(1) in assuring the sufferer that he is not left alone but is receiving loving attention and (2) in ennobling the person who makes the efforts by making him a channel for God's love.

There is a tendency to claim credit for good deeds not done by oneself and to try to escape responsibility for bad deeds committed by oneself. This is negative morality. The pernicious nature of this tendency may be more easily recognised than that of another which appears to be all right on the surface. This is the tendency to do good and claim credit for it. This is very low grade morality. Growth in morality consists in passing beyond—(1) the stage of non-morality where one is not aware of moral issues, (2) the stage of

'negative' morality where one tries to claim credit for good deeds *not done* by oneself and disown responsibility for bad deeds done by oneself, and (3) the stage of low grade morality. The first two are reprehensible no doubt. But what is the harm, it may be asked, in doing good deeds and claiming credit for them? Why should it be considered low grade morality? The reason is that at this stage the agent has not grown beyond the juvenile level of doing good, not for its own sake, but expecting a handsome return therefrom. Such an attitude tends also to strengthen egoism. One has to be even more watchful in cases where one returns good for evil because one is very likely to develop a feeling of self-righteousness in such cases. This is why the *Tirukkuraḷ* says, "The way to chastise those who do us harm is to do them good so as to quicken their moral sensibility and to give up the thought that one has done them good."[1] Otherwise, one is likely to strengthen one's egoism going about saying, 'Look, what a fine person I am! I return good for evil!' Hence even the act of returning good—*punya* (moral merit)—for evil can be as fettering in its effect as a downright bad act, if the attitude behind it is faulty. Thus moral demerit is like iron fetters and moral merit can become golden fetters. It is no consolation to one, if instead of iron fetters, golden fetters are clapped around one's feet or hands. Moral maturity, therefore, consists in attaining a state where one does good actuated solely by love for others, never caring for rewards. This is the state called *iruninaloppu* in *Siddhānta* texts. It means an attitude of equanimity alike to rewards and punishments, an attitude of indifference to praise and censure, no more attracted by the one than repulsed by the other. Be it noted that the indifference is *not* in respect of the distinction between good and evil. It is only in respect of rewards and punishments. To put it more emphatically, the morally mature person will do good even if he is to be punished therefor and refrain from evil if he is to be rewarded therefor. The *Siddhānta* texts say that when a person has reached this stage of equanimity, egoism, like a ripe cataract of the eye, is fit for removal. Ripening of egoism in this sense is described as *malaparipāka*. The Lord comes in the form of a human preceptor to perform a purificatory ceremony (*dīkṣā*) for the soul and bestow His Grace.

Cannot *karma* or morality be self-operative? Why should God be invoked? The *Siddhāntin's* answer is that the consequences of deeds cannot attach themselves to the respective agents. They take time proportionate to the strength of the deeds, just as some seeds

yield crops taking a longer time than others, some more quickly than others. As for the agents themselves, they are not morally mature to be just in apportioning the consequences to themselves. They are likely to filch reward for good deeds not done by themselves and shirk punishment for evil deeds actually done by themselves. Again, it is not for them to make grace supervene *karma*. God is the Moral Governor (*karmādhyakṣa*, or *kāvalaṉ* in Tamil), Who apportions consequences of deeds to the respective agents and, helping them to attain their full moral and spiritual stature, grants them release. It is for Him to temper justice with mercy. How does He do this? The *Siddhānta* gives the analogy of a father, medical doctor and king by way of illustration.

A father loves his son and has his well-being at heart. Hence, if the son misbehaves, the father has to use corrective measures, sometimes in the form of severe punishment. Indeed he would not be a really loving parent if he spoilt his child by pampering when the occasion called for reform by punishment. An indifferent person may overlook the lapses but a loving parent has to take suitable corrective steps. It has to be realised that the parent suffers as much as, if not more than, the son in cases of punishment. God, the Divine Parent, also suffers. The *Tiruvācakam* says: "Oh! You who are without pleasure and pain and yet have both."[2] So we have to realise that by our misdeeds, we cause suffering to God. A refractory child thus occasionally punished grows into a responsible well-behaved person. A medical doctor likewise has to prescribe medicines or perform surgical operations according to the requirements of the case. Bitter medicines have their place even as sweet ones do. Surgery is not performed for the sadistic pleasure of causing pain to the patient but rather because it is unavoidable. As for a king, the old conception was that by giving punishment and rewards, he was carrying out God's purpose by educating souls in morality. A citizen punished by the king would not have to go to hell. Even as there is reprieve for good conduct, where there is genuine repentance God in His mercy may grant pardon. Thus, even as in the analogies cited, we find that the treatment is suited to the needs of the case and is governed by the overall purpose of the ultimate good of the child, patient and subject respectively, the pleasures and pains souls experience as consequences of their deeds are apportioned by God as part of their moral training. God's grace in its tender aspect is called *anugraha* and in its tough or punitive aspect, *nigraha*. It will

be seen that even *nigraha* is really *anugraha* because punishment is meted out only to correct and reform the erring individual.

Moral education of the individual is intended by the Lord to make him learn that the informing principle of morality is love. The earlier stages of this education may be said to be normative, in the sense that an individual tries to act in conformity with a *norm*. There is tension resulting from his 'natural' inclinations pulling him in one way and his moral ideals pointing in another way. As he grows in moral stature, the individual overcomes this tension. Actuated by love, he no longer experiences the tension between the natural and the normative. The normative has become the natural. Living a good life actuated by love is not artificial. It becomes the very life-breath of the individual.

We can discern a few characteristics of this love by taking God's love as the pattern and paradigm. The following may be considered.

(1) *Readiness to forgive:* To love a person who loves us or does us a good turn is not difficult. Often it is prompted by a commercial attitude. But can we (and ought we to) love a person who does us an injury? Should offences, especially grave ones, be forgiven? Yes, especially when there is penitence, even the least sign of it. In the *Tiruviḷayāṭal-purāṇam* we come across an Oedipus situation. A young brahmin kills his father and has incestuous relationship with his mother. The Lord and His Consort (Pārvatī) see him. The Lord decides to grant him a vision of Himself and His consort. This magnanimity is too much even for Pārvatī, who as the embodiment of Grace normally pleads with the Lord for forgiveness of the sins of (mortals). She asks the Lord why He was pleased to show Himself to such a depraved person and to suggest to him expiatory measures. The Lord whose body is Grace (*karuṇai meyyaṉ*) replies: "It is not a matter for wonder when persons having intelligence, patience, virtue, righteousness, truthfulness, proper sense of fear and love are saved because these (qualities) save them. It is verily a matter for wonder to save those who have none of these qualities to support and to save them."[3] Readiness should be shown not only to forgive but also to forget the lapse. 'Forget and forgive' is not only sound ethics but also practical good sense. If a person who forgives does not forget, he is likely to develop a sense of self-righteousness and magnanimity and rouse in the person forgiven resentment and bitterness. Thus the 'forgiver' and the 'forgiven' are both debased. Even as we do not remember the lapses of our loved ones and hold these against them,

but forgive them readily, we must extend such love to all. If the Lord forgives one's trespasses, is one likely to start on a fresh career of sins? One might—but God's grace may correct that tendency. Sundaramūrti, one of the four great *Śaiva samayācāryas* says: "The Lord forgives my past lapses and protects me from future ones."[4] The Lord, so to say, wills non-recurrence of lapses, presumably by strengthening the soul's will for good, in the manner of a medical doctor building up by suitable measures the health of his patient, after curing him of some illness. The love of souls that have grown in morality and spirituality reflects this characteristic of the Lord's love. They are ready to forgive the lapses of others and to strengthen them against future lapses.

(2) A second characteristic is the *readiness to suffer* for others. Two instances from Śaivite literature spring to mind by way of illustration. One is the story of the blue-throated Śiva's drinking poison to save the entire universe from destruction and giving the nectar to the celestials. This incident is referred to by Rāma when he holds council to decide whether Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender should be accepted. Every one except Hanuman is against acceptance fearing that Vibhīṣaṇa, being a brother of Rāvaṇa, might have come to worm out secrets after being taken into Rāma's camp. Rāma, agreeing with Hanuman, decides in favour of acceptance, giving various instances of self-sacrifice, one of which is that of Śiva's drinking poison.

> Haven't you seen [the word 'seen' is significant in that it suggests direct perception of this incident by those who are morally and spiritually sensitive even though its occurrence was pre-historical] the one who drank poison for the sake of those who churned the wavetossed sea and surrendered to Him for protection when deadly and quick-spreading poison emerged? If one does not help a person broken in body and mind by misfortune, does not give him whatever one has, does not offer protection to a person seeking one as refuge, even if doing so should spell one's destruction,—of what avail one's virtue, one's manliness?[5]

In dying for another one would have lived worthily. It follows that living purely for oneself is spiritual death. There is the oft-quoted phrase from *Caṅkam* literature, 'those who do not live for themselves but belong to others'. The *Tirukkuraḷ* says: "The loveless are selfish and have all to themselves. The loving ones sacrifice the very bones

of their body for others."[6] Rāmaliṅga Swami, (1823-1874 A.D.) sings plaintively that his spirits drooped whenever he saw crops in the field wilting.[7]

The second instance is that of Kaṇṇappar, the hunter-prince who stopped the bleeding in the eye of a *Śiva-liṅga* by giving his own eye and when he saw the other eye in the *Śiva-liṅga* bleeding, proceeded without hesitation to give his other eye too. To borrow a phrase used by the *Tirukkuraḷ* about friendship, love is ready in rushing to relieve the suffering of another just as the hand automatically supports one's slipping garment.[8]

(3) A third characteristic is *readiness to serve* others. This may sound strange in the context of prayers for escape from the wheel of births and deaths. Is birth a blessing to be welcomed? If it is, why is it bewailed so frequently? Birth is a God-given opportunity to be used in securing moral and spiritual progress, which consists in passing from intense selfishness to utter selflessness. Unfortunately, more often than not, it is abused in selfish enjoyment. Such abuse results in future births to work off the backlog of *karma*. Thus a vicious circle is created, birth leading to *karma* and *karma* leading to birth. Once, by God's Grace and by performance of duties in a disinterested way, a soul breaks through this vicious circle, birth ceases to bind. A liberated soul goes on acting for the welfare of others, and welcomes future births to serve God and His creatures. Thus births are of two kinds—those resulting from previous *karma* and those taken to serve God. The former kind is dreaded and the latter welcomed. To illustrate the latter, let us recall the following: "May I have birth again so that my love may blossom and flourish!" sings Appar—praying for birth which will enable him to express his love for God and His creatures.[9] "I worship the birth which has given me an opportunity to write about God's devotees" sings Sēkkiḻār, the author of the *Periyapurāṇam*.[10] "If I can be of service to God's devotees, I will take countless births," is Tāyumāṉavar's declaration.[11]

According to Hindu theology, celestial regions are the places where pleasures are experienced as fruits of spiritual merit (*punya*). Hell is the place where the fruits of spiritual demerit (*pāpa*) are experienced. Hence it is only in this world that there is experience of pleasure and pain. A sensitive soul will realise that these are the results of *punya* and *pāpa*, acquired by acting with a sense of agency and will learn to act righteously, actuated by love for God and His creatures. Love of God expresses itself in love of His creatures.

The *Śivajñāna Siddhiyār* says, "He who has no love for God has no love for His devotees; he who has no love for every soul has no love for himself either. Why talk about such witless corpses?"[12] Hence even the celestials long to be born in this world to worship God. Appar welcomes even human birth if He can have a vision of the Lord "with His arched eye-brows, smile hovering round His roseate lips, matted wet locks, milk-white sacred ashes on His body, red like the coral, and the sweet, beautiful foot lifted (to offer protection)".[13] The word, 'even' is used above in a deprecatory sense to call attention to the usual gross misuse of human birth. The *Siddhiyār* emphasizes the value of human birth saying that to attain it is like crossing the sea, using one's hands in swimming.[14] That such a birth, rare to obtain, is used not in service but in selfish enjoyment is the reason for prayers against birth. Birth as a human being with uninterrupted awareness of the presence of God is most welcome as affording opportunity of worship and service.

How does Divine Grace operate? Tiruñāsambandhar says that there is no way of analysing or accounting for Grace. "The ways of the Lord's Grace and His pristine majesty are boundless."[15] Śaiva Siddhānta mentions Grace as one of the Lord's five functions, the other four being creation, maintenance, destruction and obscuration. But the *Siddhānta* texts make it very clear that Grace is not just one of the five but is basic to the other four as well. It is in Grace that the Lord creates and maintains the world. How can He, in Grace, destroy or cause obscuration? Destruction is to give periodic rest to the souls before creation starts again. Obscuration (*tirobhāva*) is a difficult concept. The Lord causes obscuration or veils the truth so that there may not be premature withdrawal from life or refusal to experience the fruits of *karma*, before the soul has grown to its full moral and spiritual stature, through the education that life offers.

This Grace of the Lord is more tender than the love of a mother who suckles her child at the appropriate time even before the child cries for it, says Māṇikkavācakar.[16] We are reminded of the following:

> "'Before they call', says God, 'I will answer and
> while they are yet speaking, I will hear'."[17]

Karma cannot prevail before Grace. Appar describes its effect graphically. "As a spark of fire can reduce to ashes faggots heaped

sky-high, the Lord's name [His Grace] will destroy one's sins."[18] Tāyumāṉavar says that even as a stone flung into the midst of a flock of crows scatters them, Grace will destroy our *karma*, no matter how many and how black our deeds are.[19] Such Grace is not earned.

Grace comes as a free gift. Vaiṣṇavite tradition speaks of the principle of the monkey and its young ones (*markaṭa kisora nyāya*) and the principle of the cat and its kittens (*mārjāla kisora nyāya*). The analogy of the ladder and the boat also is used. The point is that in the former of each set, human effort is called for to co-operate with Divine Grace and in the latter it is entirely the operation of God's Grace. The soul, no doubt, has to strive a little. But this very effort is inspired by God—"Worshipping His Feet, by His grace", as Māṇikkavācakar has it.[20] Paṭṭinaṭṭar, one of the Śaivite saints, sings plaintively, "I am not like the young one of a monkey. Be pleased to treat me like a kitten."[21]

We have a verse in the *Tirumaṇṭiram* which describes the conduct of the realised ones, "The sages who know themselves, unravel the knot of their past *karma*, mould and control (present and future) *karma*, by the Grace of the Lord at Whose Feet they place their head."[22]

We may note here that the sages who know themselves realise that they are eternally dependent on the Lord and so attune their wills to His. They have learnt to conform their wills to the operation of Divine Grace. So far as past *karma* is concerned, they do not cut this 'Gordian' knot by refusal to experience its fruits but face them with calm and resolution. Having attuned their wills to the Lord's, all action hereafter for them becomes one sustained saga of serving His purpose. Hence *karma* ceases to bind. It may bring suffering but this suffering is willingly borne and is creative in character, teaching the world by example how to bear it oneself and how to seek to remove it for others. We are reminded of the remark of St. Thomas Aquinas that to bear with patience wrongs done to oneself is a mark of perfection and to bear with patience wrongs done to someone else is a mark of imperfection and even of actual sin. "Patient endurance of suffering and non-injury of life—just these constitute penance," says the *Tirukkuraḷ*.[23] An individual has to bear suffering with fortitude and not inflict it on others. He should, on the contrary, try to relieve others of their suffering.

Does God watch from a distance, so to say, the progress or the back slidings of the soul? No. He follows the soul through all its

wanderings. Nammāḻvār, the Vaiṣṇavite mystic, and Māṇikkavācakar alike speak of a destiny compelling the Lord to follow the soul in order to rescue it. "There is a veritable destiny encompassing the Lord to confront the soul in any and every kind of birth, eon after eon", says Nammāḻvār.[24] "The Lord is the creator of the seven worlds. He has eight shoulders"—What if He is omnipotent thus? "He is bound by a destiny to rescue me (even me !)."[25] As the Master—so the servants. The realised souls are like the Lord. "They swim in the sea of mercy to rescue souls struggling in the sea of births."[26] The Law (of *karma*) holds souls in thrall so long as they are not emancipated from their egoism. Once they surrender to Love, Law is brought under its control. The Supreme lesson then is Love. Hence Tirumūlar sings:

> Love and the Lord (Śiva) are different say the ignorant
> Love is (verily) the Lord, (this) no one understands
> Love is (verily) the Lord, when everyone has understood (this)
> They become Love and abide in the Lord as love.[27]

Do we have a hint here that they themselves abide in the Lord only after every one has understood that Love is the Lord and not till then? In other words, persons who have realised in their own experience the truth that Love is the Lord, guide others to do likewise and become themselves the embodiment of Love. In the words of Māṇikkavācakar, "the Lord fashions for them a frame as though it is made out of a melting heart".[28] Persons with such a transformed personality moved by compassion for others, cannot rest till they have made these others also like unto themselves—i.e. love-charged souls.

What is the state of our present psycho-physical frame? What is our present life like? Māṇikkavācakar says,

> "All false am I, false is my heart, and false my love; yet if I—*karma*-bound as I am—weep, may not I gain You? Falsehood has affected the core of my being. Hence my love is a pretence. My words of praise are untruthful. Folding my hands in adoration lacks sincerity. Can I in such a state, wipe out my depravity by my tears? Teach me the way by which I may reach you."[29]

Here is a suggestion that if, by His grace, we have the 'gift of tears', we may weep for our sins and, washed clean thereby, become sensitive to His Grace.

There is one more aspect we may consider in conclusion. Remorse and repentance for the misdeeds of the past and present are helpful in removing the defilement. But something positive is also called for. Weeds have to be removed to allow the crops to come up. But removal of weeds is not, and should not, be the major aim of cultivation. As the crops come up, the weeds get automatically pushed out. To change the metaphor, it is necessary to realise that we are in darkness if we really are so, instead of ignoring it. But if we really deplore the darkness, the practical thing to do is to let in light. Even so, as we sing the praises of the Lord and fill our hearts, minds and souls with His light, *karma* is rooted out. Māṇikkavācakar and Nammāḻvār representing the Tamil tradition in Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite mysticism alike commend this procedure.

"His praise, who sings repeatedly and bows and worships He frees from bonds of sin."[30]

> "My mind concentrated on You, singing your melodious ceaseless and great praise, I have completely rooted out my sins of the past."[31]

Singing His praises is the devotee's main aim. Removal of *karma* is a by-product and is incidental. Thus 'adoration of the Lord is the pulsation of our Being'. This is to have life and to have it more abundantly. Such life radiates love and light, rooted as it is in the source of all love and light.

To sum up in the words of the *Tirukkuraḷ*: "The two deeds (*karma*) associated with (spiritual) darkness will not draw near those who sing the meaningful praises of the Lord."[32]

Notes

1. *Tirukkuraḷ*, XXXII, 4.
2. *Tiruvācakam*, Civapurāṇam, line 70.
3. *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal purāṇam* of Perumpaṟṟappuliyūr nampi, XXXIV, 17.
4. *Cuntarar Tevāram*, relating to Tiruvārur, first line beginning with the words 'Poṉṉum meypporuḷum'.
5. *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam*, Vipīṣaṇanaṉ Aṭaikkalappaṭalam, 111.
6. *Tirukkuraḷ*, VIII, 2.
7. *Tiruaruṭpa*, Piḷḷaipperuviṇappam, 62.
8. *Tirukkuraḷ*, LXXIX, 8.

9. *Appar Tevāram,* beginning with the words 'annam pālikkum'.
10. *Periyapurāṇam,* XX, 60.
11. *Tāyumāṉavacuvāmikaḷ pāṭal,* XVII, 65 p. 127 (Tarmaiātiṉam 1965).
12. *Civañāṉacittiyār,* Cupakkam, XII, 2.
13. *Appar Tevāram,* beginning with the words 'Kunittapuruvamum'.
14. *Civañāṉacittiyār,* II, 89.
15. *Tiruñāṉacampantar Tevāram,* Tiruppācuram, 4.
16. *Tiruvācakam,* Piṭṭittappāṭṭu, 9.
17. *Isaiah,* LXV, 25.
18. *Appar Tevāram,* Namaccivāyattiruppatiham, 3.
19. *Tāyumāṉavacuvāmikaḷ pāṭal,* p. 63 (Tarmaiātiṉam 1965).
20. *Tiruvācakam,* Civapurāṇam, line 18.
21. Paṭṭinaṭṭār, *Paṭṭinattuppiḷḷaiyār prapaṭnam,* verse beginning with the words 'maṇṭikkuruḷai'.
22. *Tirumaṇṭiram*—2565, beginning with the words 'tanṉai arintiṭum'.
23. *Tirukkuraḷ,* XXVII, 1.
24. *Tiruvaimoḻi,* II, 7, 6.
25. *Tirukkovaiyār,* 7.
26. *Tiruaruṭpayaṉ,* X, 10.
27. *Tirumaṇṭiram,* 257.
28. *Tiruvācakam,* Tiruvantappakuṭi, lines 175-177
29. *Tiruvācakam,* Tiruccaṭakam, 90.
30. *Tiruvācakam,* Tiruppoṉtcal, 7.
31. *Tiruvaimoḻi,* II, 6, 6.
32. *Tirukkuraḷ,* I, 5.

2

"MADNESS" AND DEVOTION IN MĀṆIKKAVĀCAKAR'S *TIRUVĀCAKAM*

Glenn E. Yocum

Much Madness is divinest Sense—
To a discerning Eye—
Much Sense—the starkest Madness—*

INCLUSION of the word 'madness' in the title of a paper on Hindu devotional poetry calls for a definition of this term. Actually, in this regard it is easier to say what I do not mean. By 'madness' I do not intend to signify any Western psychoanalytic definition of insanity. While on occasion I shall also mention 'hysterical behavior', I am using these terms naively, as one meets with them in everyday parlance. They do not bear the weight of psychoanalytic technical terms based upon clinical observations. In fact, the use of 'madness' in my paper was suggested by the appearance of the Tamil equivalents *piccu*, *pittu*, and *uṉmattam* in the *Tiruvācakam* itself. Thus, I am not imposing, or at least not attempting to impose, a modern Western definition of insanity upon Tamil expressions of 1000 years ago.

It does seem to me, however, that *pittu* and *uṉmattam* have roughly the same connotation for Māṇikkavācakar that 'mad' commonly has for us, namely, striking deviation from normal, widely accepted personal and social behavior. While the standards of normality may differ greatly between ninth-century Tamilnadu and twentieth-century America, the type of phenomena indicative of 'madness' in the *Tiruvācakam* would merit that label in contemporary Western society too. My purpose in this paper will not be to offer a psychological analysis of Māṇikkavācakar's experience but to describe 'madness' as it appears in the *Tiruvācakam* and to set this phenomenon in its ideological, sociological, and historical perspectives.

The most vivid description of ecstatic devotional 'madness' in the *Tiruvācakam* is found in the third hymn. After Śiva had revealed

himself to Māṇikkavācakar in the form of a *guru* at Peruntuṟai, the poet describes his own behavior as follows:

> While unperishing love melted my bones,
> I cried,
> I shouted again and again,
> louder than the waves of the billowing sea,
> I became confused,
> I fell,
> I rolled,
> I wailed.
>
> Bewildered like a madman [*pittar*],
> intoxicated like a crazy drunk [*mattar*],
> so that people were puzzled
> and those who heard wondered,
>
> wild as a rutting elephant which cannot be mounted,
> I could not contain myself.
>
> (3 : 150-156)[1]

Māṇikkavācakar then goes on to tell how in this state of ecstasy his body became suffused with ambrosia. Indeed the image seems quite modern; for Śiva is said to pump honey into the saint's body, to inject ambrosia into the very hollow of his bones. All this has the result of creating for Māṇikkavācakar a new heart (*uḷḷam*) and body (*ākkai*) whose very nature is to melt and ooze with love (3 : 176-177). Thus, the devotee's madness is a manifestation of his new form, of a life utterly transformed by the grace of Śiva.

Although the following two verses do not specifically mention madness, they do depict the same kind of hysterical behavior already noted:

> Ah, when will I get to gaze upon
> the unique One to whom no other compares,
> Him who is fire, water, wind, earth, and ether,
> Him whom others cannot understand?
> With voice stammering,
> a cataract of tears gushing forth,
> hands joined in worship,
> when will I adorn Him with fragrant flowers?
> when will I be united with my uncut Gem?
>
> With heart melting, melting,
> with hair bristling, bristling,
> when will I enter (union) with Him?

Standing, sitting, lying, rising,
laughing, weeping, serving, praising—
when will I do all these things?
When will I gaze upon His holy form,
which gleams like the sunset?
When will I be united with my uncut Gem?

(27 : 7-8)

Implicit in this passage is the idea that unless one displays such overt signs of ecstasy, he is not a true devotee, has not really gained release (*vīṭu, mutti* [Skt. *mukti*]), has not experienced the full measure of Śiva's grace. The notion that such emotional outpourings are indicators of one's spiritual status is even more pronounced in the fourth decade of the Tiruccaṭakam (*Tiruvācakam* 5), where Māṇikkavācakar laments the absence of such signs in his own life (see especially 5 : 31, 39). One is reminded somewhat of the evangelical Protestant's need for frequent profound stirrings of his emotions in order to ensure that he is truly saved.[2]

Often in the *Tiruvācakam* Māṇikkavācakar simply states that Śiva has filled him with madness, intoxicated him. The words used in these cases are various forms of *pittu, piccu* and *uṉmattam*, all connoting madness or insanity.[3] In the following verse both *pittu* and *mattam* are used to describe how Śiva's grace invades the devotee's mind:

The Father, the Lord of Peruntuṟai,
filled me with madness [*pittu*],
cut off my rebirth,
came and made my mind indescribably intoxicated [*mattam*],
accepted me as His slave,
He, my Medicine,
looked on me with great grace
and came as undying bliss.

(47 : 6)

Indeed, the nature of bliss (*āṉatam*) itself is elsewhere characterized by confusion, bewilderment, stupor (*māl*) (47 : 2). This state of confusion (*māl*) contrasts with and supersedes worldly wisdom (*catur*) (36 : 2). Thus, it is not surprising that one result of Śiva's grace is that by it he shows Māṇikkavācakar how to become bewildered (*māl*) (50 : 3).

There is ample evidence in the *Tiruvācakam* for us to postulate two quite separate states of consciousness. On the one hand, there is the

sphere of ordinary awareness, reason, worldly wisdom, and self-seeking. Opposed to such normal states of mind, however, is the madness of ecstatic devotion to Śiva. And as we have already seen, this non-ordinary consciousness is accompanied by a whole series of physical manifestations—weeping, laughing, rolling about on the ground, trembling, babbling incoherently (*pitarri*) (21 : 10), hair standing on end, etc. The opposition between the two types of consciousness is further evidenced by the derision which Māṇikka-vācakar's hysterical actions provoke. Thus, after enumerating all the signs of ecstasy—melting, crying, trembling, weeping, singing, agitation—Māṇikkavācakar says:

> Though the world mocked me
> calling me "demon" [*pēy*],
> I abandoned shame.
> The local people's despising talk
> my mind bent
> into ornaments of praise.
>
> (4 : 67-70)

In the thirty-first hymn the contrast between the bondage of ordinary, mundane consciousness and the ecstasy of devotion is sharply drawn:

> He graciously severed
> the bondage [*pācam*] of a creature [*pacu*] like me
> who has neither devotion nor good reputation.
> He changed me so that people said,
> "This fellow is a madman [*pittaṉ*]."
> He tied me to his sacred feet
> with the strong rope of firm conviction
> so that I could not move away.
> In gleaming Tillai I saw
> the sports of the wise One [*vittakaṉar*].
>
> (31 : 7)

But to get an even better idea of the kind of consciousness which enslaves one in a state of *pācam*, we need only move back two verses:

> A dog such as me
> caught in the whirlpool of caste, family, and birth,
> floundering without support,

He accepted as His own,
  putting an end to my miserable condition.
My foolishness,
  the forms of other (gods),
  thoughts of "I" and "mine",
He destroyed.
  In shining Tillai I saw
  Him who is the faultless ambrosia.

(31 : 5)

Thus, the madness of devotional ecstasy stands opposed not only to reason and worldly wisdom but also to egocentric attachment and to preoccupation with familial and social relationships. (We shall return to the social implications below.) Devotional madness, in short, is a state of absolute freedom where one is unconditioned by the structures of ordinary reality. What better figure could express the utter discontinuity of this state with everyday consciousness than madness? But, as we have seen, this is not simply a pleasant metaphor. For Śiva's devotees appear to be literally mad. They weep and laugh hysterically. They indulge in highly unusual behavior. Unlike those practiced in certain disciplines of *yoga* and meditation, Māṇikkavācakar does not achieve a state of freedom and unconditionedness through a process of withdrawal into his inmost self. Rather he becomes enslaved, possessed by a being whom he perceives to be different from himself. His goal is not to discover, to absorb, all things in his own self but to allow his self to be discovered, to be penetrated, by Śiva in the most intimate possible personal union.

Māṇikkavācakar sees Śiva not as a philosophical abstraction but as a very real personality whose nature is, on the one hand, broadly revealed in the purāṇic accounts about the god and, on the other, is vividly realized in the saint's own personal experience. Hence, Māṇikkavācakar's madness can only be comprehended with reference to the peculiar personality and mode of operation of Śiva himself.

The way Śiva operates toward his devotees is to enslave (*āṭkoḷ*) them, to become the driving force in their lives. In a sense, the bystanders' derisive observation that Śiva's *bhakta* appears as one possessed by a demon is not far off the mark, because this is, in fact, what Śiva does—he possesses his devotees; he overwhelms them; he enters them and takes control of their lives. Here is a description of the effect of Śiva's actions on Māṇikkavācakar, which draws together several of the aforementioned themes:

O King of loving devotees!
O Father who owns me as Your slave!
You entered me, body and soul,
  abiding in me
  so that all my bones become soft and melt.
O Light of truth who dispels the darkness of falsehood!
O abiding, clear, calm Sea of ambrosia!
O Śiva who dwells in holy Peruntuṟai!
O unique Consciousness [*ōr uṇarvē*],
  which is realized [*uṇarvatu*] as standing firm,
  transcending words and (ordinary) consciousness [*uṇarvu*],
O, let me know a way to tell of You!

(22 : 3)

The stream of devotional emotion which culminates in the ecstatic outpouring of love has its source in Śiva's initiative. When he enters into, possesses, his devotees, they become mad with the ecstatic love that is the hallmark of the new state of consciousness in which one does not think in terms of "I" and "mine", which indeed cannot be articulated in categories of human thought and language, designed as such categories are to express man's ordinary, conditioned experience. As has already been stated, to be mad with love for Śiva is to know release from *pācam* (bondage). One might say that *bhakti* itself is salvation.[4] It is, then, little wonder that the absence of madness caused Māṇikkavācakar such intense concern.

But why, we might ask, should Śiva's overlordship, his possession of his *bhaktas*, occasion their becoming mad? In brief, because to be possessed is to become like one's possessor; and to become like Śiva is to become mad. Although there is no attempt on Māṇikkavācakar's part to imitate the details of Śiva's behavior as related in the myths about the god, it is not difficult to discern a continuum between the madness of Śiva himself and the ecstasy which he instills in his devotees. That Śiva is regarded as mad is confirmed by the application to him of the same epithet which elsewhere refers to Māṇikkavācakar, viz., *pittaṉ* (madman) (11 : 16, 30 : 2, 37 : 8; also cf. *pitta vaṭivu* in 13 : 19). Rather than outlining the various stories upon which Śiva's reputation as a madman is founded, here are two verses from the *Tiruvācakam* in which a very desperate Māṇikkavācakar threatens to slander Śiva for not revealing himself.[5] Clearly, Māṇikkavācakar's intentions of abusing Śiva are well served by the god's mythology:

O Hero who is adorned
by a garland of skulls like a cluster of stars,
by fire,
by snakes!
Look here, don't leave me!
If You leave me
and if men of knowledge ask me
"Whose slave are you?"
I'll give them cause to ridicule You by saying,
"I'm the servant of the glorious devotees
of Uttarakōcamaṅkai's King."

I'll give them cause to ridicule You by revealing
how my disgusting faults and service are dedicated
to You, the Lord.
Look here, don't leave me!
If You leave me,
I'll insult You saying,
"O Madman [*piccaṉ*] who wears the fierce elephant's skin!
O Madman [*piccaṉ*] who wears the tiger's skin!
O Madman [*piccaṉ*] who ate the poison!
O Madman [*piccaṉ*] surrounded by the fire of the town's crematorium!
O Madman [*piccaṉ*] who has me as His slave!"

(6 : 48-49)

While certain of Śiva's bizarre actions became the model for the behavior of Śaivas such as the Kāpālikas, we do not have any evidence that suggests Māṇikkavācakar performed a *sādhana* involving an *imitatio dei*. Nevertheless, we note in his descriptions of the ecstatic consciousness induced by Śiva's grace a sense of transcendence of all worldly limitations—physical, personal, and social. And in this transcendence Māṇikkavācakar participates in the divine madness of God himself; for whatever other meanings the myths about Śiva may have, they show him to be the transcendent figure *par excellence*. Everyday values are set on their heads. By the world's standards Śiva is mad. Imagine him, as Māṇikkavācakar does, dancing in the crematorium:

The One who did not appear (to Viṣṇu),
our eternal Lord,
is dancing right now in the burning ground
with the demons,
whirling and swaying,

mad [*uṉmattam*],
clad with a tiger's skin,
homeless.

(5 : 7)

Śiva subsumes all oppositions within himself. He is destroyer as well as creator, Mahāyogin as well as Naṭarājan, *saṃnyāsin* as well as *gṛhastha*. The figure of Śiva presents a powerful concrete image of the transcendence of everyday reality. Birth and death, family and caste, decorum and attachment to possessions are all vividly disregarded by Śiva. They exercise no effect upon him. Thus, the eyes of the world perceive Śiva as being mad. Can it be surprising that some of his devotees should appear mad also?

We must keep in mind, however, that Śiva's madness is the madness of love. The devotees become like him in love as well as in madness. In the *Tiruvācakam* Śiva himself is called a lover of his lovers, a devotee of his devotees (*aṉparukku aṉpanē*) (1 : 71); a lover (*kātalaṉ*) (2 : 113); and even a *bhakta* (T., *pattā*) (4 : 176). Possession is thus possession by a mad lover. Transcendence is characterized by love. Absence of all thoughts of "I" and "mine" is consequently seen to be an aspect of totally committed, selfless love.

If we are to sum up the meaning of Māṇikkavācakar's madness in philosophical terms, we might say that it is the mode of being which is appropriate to the *jivan-mukta*. It is how one appears who exists in the sphere of *saṃsāra* but is no longer bound by its constraints. Madness is to normality what *mokṣa* is to *saṃsāra*. Māṇikkavācakar is implicitly claiming that to live authentically in relation to what is ultimately real, i.e., to Śiva, is to exist in a state of ecstasy which those still caught in *saṃsāra* call madness. Or to turn the symbol of madness around, in a mad world sane men will appear to be crazy. When seen from the perspective of the complex of philosophical-theological ideas in the *Tiruvācakam*, Māṇikkavācakar's madness can only be understood in the context of salvation's relation to the saṃsāric order. In short, *saṃsāra*, conditionedness, *karma*, attachment, the *devas*, and normality, on the one side, stand opposed to and are transcended by *mokṣa*, unconditionedness, freedom from *karma*, love, Śiva, and madness, on the other.

What may now seem unexpected is that Māṇikkavācakar does not reject the world. He is not, strictly speaking, an ascetic.

Rather, he has a tendency to contrast his own undeserved good fortune of having received Śiva's grace with that of ascetics who practice *tapas* without gaining God's favor. In several passages of the *Tiruvācakam* he adopts the attitude of a woman in love with Śiva. His poetry abounds in popular features—in colloquialisms and in poems to be sung while playing village games. Indeed, he writes in Tamil rather than Sanskrit, which as an educated Brahmin he almost certainly was capable of doing. He is not a religious elitist. Śiva's grace is within the reach of all men, not confined to those who would devote their lives full-time to religious pursuits.

In spite of Māṇikkavācakar's fulminations against his own susceptibility to the attractions of female beauty, his general attitude is not that of the world-renouncer. His use of human love as a model for his own devotion, his employment of natural details for poetic effect, and his frequent attention to the relationship between Śiva and Umā shows an attitude which bends the world to religious goals rather than rejects it. It would not be too misleading to claim that Māṇikkavācakar's somewhat ambiguous attitude towards the phenomenal world is basically Tantric. In this attitude too he rather reflects the disposition of Śiva himself and, indeed, furnishes us with a quintessential example of the Hindu tradition's dual attitude of both affirmation and denial of the world.

Part and parcel of the opposition between *saṃsāra* and *mokṣa* are the different kinds of social relationships appropriate to these two modes of existence. We have already noted one instance where Māṇikkavācakar relates how Śiva relieved him of the burdens of family and caste, and this is not an isolated example. Excerpts from the first two verses of *Tiruppāvalli*, "The Flower-Picking Hymn", are further evidence of the same effect:

> The moment He put His sacred feet on my head,
> I abandoned all my relatives [*curraṅkaḷ*]
> who gave me help and support.
> (13 : 1)
> The Lord of the Pāṇṭiyan land
> ended my bondage
> to my father,
> to my mother,
> to all my relatives [*curram*].
> (13 : 2)

But Śiva does not simply sever old ties, he replaces them with new

relationships of an entirely different sort. Several verses further along in the same hymn we read:

> Our Lord has given me
> a head so that I might bow to Him,
> a mouth so that I might hail His foot,
> an assembly of His glorious devotees
> so that I might join them.
> (13 : 7)

The relationships of family and caste are exchanged for membership in the band of Śiva's *bhaktas*. Māṇikkavācakar expresses this change of society by saying:[6]

> The Lord allowed forlorn me to obtain bliss
> and caused me to enter His gracious band of devotees,
> thus bringing me into good relationships (*uṟavu*].
> (42 : 7)

At another place Māṇikkavācakar states that he has no desire for a position like Indra's, Viṣṇu's, or Brahmā's and that he will befriend no one but Śiva's devotees (5 : 2). The fellowship of the other *bhaktas*, however, is desired as much for what it is not as for its positive qualities. Negatively stated, such relationships are based upon lack of structure and habituated action. Or to put the same idea more constructively, the fellowship of the devotees represents social freedom, spontaneity, and community. Briefly expressed by Māṇikkavācakar himself,

> We're not subject to anyone.
> We don't fear anything.
> We've joined His devotees.
> We'll dive (into the sea of bliss) again and again
> and cavort there with His devotees.
> (5 : 30)

I cannot resist one more quotation from the *Tiruvācakam* on this point, and while the entire forty-fifth hymn is pertinent, I shall limit myself to just one verse:

> Each to himself is his own kin [*curṟam*].
> Each to himself is his own law.
> "Who are we?", "What is ours?", "What is bondage [*pācam*]?"

To make these delusions [*māyam*] go away
join with the ancient devotees of the King,
accept His will as your own intention.
If you enter the way which leads to Lord Puyaṅkaṉ's golden feet,
He will remove what is false.

(45 : 3)

In his book *The Ritual Process*, Victor Turner sets forth a theory about the opposition between social structure and *communitas*, which I find very suggestive for interpreting the social aspect of Māṇikkavācakar's *bhakti*. *Communitas*, as opposed to everyday social structure, represents personal interaction between individuals not wearing their usual social masks. This is the sphere of Martin Buber's "I" and "thou". Turner argues that societies exhibit a dialectic between these two types of human relatedness and that *communitas* is especially evident in ritual situations and among certain types of religious groups. In this regard the early followers of Francis of Assisi are cited as a classic example of *communitas*.[7] Likewise, Māṇikkavācakar, in leaving behind the social hierarchy of kinship and caste, enters the egalitarian, unstructured companionship of Śiva's devotees where each serves the other and all are the slaves of God. The opposition between structure and *communitas* at a social level is directly related to the opposition between *saṃsāra* and *mokṣa*, between sanity and madness, at an ontological-epistemological-psychological level. Indeed several of the category oppositions which Turner sees as parallel to that between *communitas* and structure are equally descriptive of the dynamics of Māṇikkavācakar's experience and expression—for example, the following, where correlates of the *communitas* category are listed first: homogeneity/heterogeneity, absence of status/status, sexual continence/sexuality, humility/just pride of position, no distinctions of wealth/distinctions of wealth, total obedience (to Śiva)/obedience only to superior rank, unselfishness/selfishness, sacredness/secularity, suspension of kinship rights and obligations/kinship rights and obligations, continuous reference to mystical powers (and experience)/intermittent reference to mystical powers (and experience), foolishness/sagacity, and simplicity/complexity.[8]

Turner's argument is, of course, based mainly on recent ethnographic data, whereas in the case of Māṇikkavācakar we are limited almost entirely to the level of ideology; for we really do not know if the *bhaktas* exemplified the kind of *communitas* which the *Tiruvācakam*

and other Tamil Śaiva devotional hymns would lead us to expect. Be that as it may, the polarities which emerge from Māṇikkavācakar's thinking are so similar to the oppositions postulated by Turner that it seems we are almost certainly dealing with structurally analogous sets of phenomena. In fact, Turner discusses Caitanya and his followers as a religious group demonstrating his theory,[9] and as we shall mention below, Caitanya and Māṇikkavācakar otherwise have significant features in common.

To stress once again the wider context of Māṇikkavācakar's liberation from traditional social roles, here is a verse from the Aṟputappattu, "The Miracle Decad":

To wandering me,
  excited by and enjoying the company of
    wealth,
    relatives [*cuṟṟam*],
    women,
    and other sensual pleasures,
He gave release [*viṭu*],
  destroyed my cruel *karma* [*toḻil*],
  revealed His foot which is like a tender flower,
  caused me to dance,
  entered my inmost part [*akam*],
  became my Lord.
This singular miracle I do not comprehend.

(41 : 5)

Māṇikkavācakar's release from structured social relationships is simply one aspect of the total freedom effected by the working of Śiva's grace. Structured relationships are but one facet of the bondage which includes *karma*, sensuality, and "sanity". As A.K. Ramanujan has pointed out with respect to the Vīraśaivas, *bhakti* stands opposed to all that would render the universe safe and manipulable—from the closely defined relationships of caste to established forms of temple ritual to the concept of inexorable karmic causality.[10] It is this world-view of reasonableness, predictableness, normality, and habit that *bhakti* blows wide open.

If ideally *bhakti* is productive of *communitas* as opposed to social structure, it also assumes a type of individuality which is alien to the hierarchical interrelatedness of caste and family. Louis Dumont has said, "The religion of love supposes two perfectly individualized terms; in order to conceive of a personal Lord there must also be a

believer who sees himself as an individual."[11] Although basically Dumont interprets *bhakti* as "a sanyasic development, an invention of the renouncer,"[12] he suggests that the emotional *bhakti*, which originated in South India and which Māṇikkavācakar epitomizes, is strongly reminiscent of possession as found in Indian folk religion.[13] Possession, as well as the *samnyāsin's* renunciation, emphasizes individuality rather than identity determined by relations to other members of society.

Dumont's mention of possession as a phenomenon similar to certain forms of *bhakti* forms a bridge to some historical considerations about the religious background of Māṇikkavācakar's madness. Possession and ecstatic dancing appear to have been prominent features of early Tamil religion, insofar as we are able to glimpse the shape of religious practice in early Tamilnadu from occasional references in Caṅkam poetry. Such examples of religious dancing and possession are particularly associated with the cult of Murukaṉ, and these forms are strikingly brought together in the shamanistic dance of the Vēlaṉ, the priest of Murukaṉ. This dance is sometimes called the *veṟiyāṭṭu* or *veṟi ayartal* with priests referred to as *veṟiyayar*.[14] The word *veṟi* indicates the ecstatic nature of the dance, for it connotes drunkenness, intoxication, giddiness.[15] *Veṟi* can also signify fermented palm toddy, the source of intoxication, although there is no evidence of which I am aware suggesting that the *veṟiyāṭṭu* was accompanied by the ingestion of the physical intoxicant.[16] The Vēlaṉ's *veṟi*, his madness, apparently did not depend on any external stimulant but was due entirely to his possession by Murukaṉ.

Space does not permit further discussion of the references in early Tamil literature, both in Caṅkam poetry and the *Cilappatikāram*, to ecstatic experience based upon the possession of an individual by a supernatural being.[17] Suffice it to say that some of the features are remarkably similar to the madness which Śiva's grace instills in Māṇikkavācakar and other of his devotees. Dancing, hair standing on end, and trembling are all physical characteristics which find expression in both the early Tamil shamanistic tradition of divine possession and in the later *bhakti* cult. But even more significant than these epiphenomena is the continuity of experience and ideology, viz., of being overpowered by a god.

Another factor which probably contributed to the prominence in the *Tiruvācakam* of Māṇikkavācakar's enslavement and possession by Śiva is the concept of the *guru-śiṣya* relationship. Māṇikkavācakar

had a very decisive conversion experience at the port of Peruntuṟai where he met a *guru*, whom he took to be Śiva himself in the form of a human teacher and to whom Māṇikkavācakar committed himself as a disciple. A *śiṣya* is supposed to surrender himself completely to his *guru*. The *guru* "indwells" his disciple. In effect, the *śiṣya* negates himself. He lives only for his *guru*. As can readily be inferred, there is some overlap between this attitude and that of a shamanistic type of possession. In the *Tiruvācakam* a third significant mode of relationship with Śiva is Māṇikkavācakar's casting himself in the role of a young woman in love with her lover-bridegroom Śiva. This romantic model also permits ample scope for the play of strong emotions and forgetfulness of self. We might think of a continuum of relationships, overlapping and interpenetrating each other. On the one end is the total possession of Māṇikkavācakar by Śiva. At the other is the bridal mysticism of lover and beloved. Lying in between is the model of *guru* and *śiṣya*. If the two ends of our spectrum seem most conducive to the intense emotions of ecstasy and madness, it must be remembered that these relationships do not occur in pure form but almost always are expressed in a combination of characteristics derived from each.

If it is possible to suggest a more or less plausible connection between Māṇikkavācakar's madness and the phenomenon of ecstatic possession in early Tamil religion, there is no gainsaying the presence of a madness similar to Māṇikkavācakar's in other well-known *bhaktas*, both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava, both anterior to and coming after Māṇikkavācakar. In the realm of *bhakti* Māṇikkavācakar's madness is anything but an isolated case. For example, Kāraikkālammaiyār's behavior prompted the charge that she was possessed by a demon (*pēy*). Appar says that Śiva reveals release (*mutti*) to his devotees who have become like madmen (*pittar*).[18] Tāyumaṉavār tells of *bhaktas* fainting in ecstasy and how he himself cried and raved and was filled with madness (*Tāyumaṉavār Pāṭal* 77, 83).[19]

Moving to the Vaiṣṇavas, there is Kulacēkarāḻvār, who calls "everyone mad but the madmen who with tearful eyes and thrilled body, pine for Him, and sing and dance and worship Vishnu" (*Perumaḷ Tirumoḻi* II, 9).[20] Or to quote the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa:*

> Without the bristling of the hair of the body,
> without the mind dissolving, without being
> inarticulate because of tears of joy, without

bhakti, how can the heart be purified?
He whose voice is stammering (from emotion),
whose thoughts dissolve, who repeatedly weeps
and laughs, who, shameless, sings and dances,—
such a person, attached by *bhakti* to me, purifies
the world.

(*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* XI. 14.23-24)[21]

Finally, reference must be made to Caitanya; for in him the fervor of devotion, while not qualitatively different from the other examples mentioned, reaches a new emotional pitch. At times during the extended *kīrtanas* which he and his followers regularly held, Caitanya is reported to have fallen to the ground in a stupor much like an epileptic seizure.[22] In the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, perhaps the most important of the biographies of Caitanya, he is made to say, "I repeated Kṛṣṇa's name incessantly, and my mind became unhinged. I could not be calm—I became mad, and so I laugh and weep and dance and sing.... Once, my mind was calm, but in the name of Kṛṣṇa rationality has disappeared"(*Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi* 7 : 74f.).[23]

Summing up, Māṇikkavācakar's madness is not without precedent and certainly has numerous parallels in later Indian religious history. Devotional madness, far from being an infrequently attested psychological aberration in the world of Hindu *bhakti*, is virtually *the* normative state of consciousness for those who merit the appellation *bhakta*. To be devoted is in some sense to be mad—a madness, however, not of warped delusion but of expansive, indeed boundless, love; an ecstasy not tied to position or learning but open to all.

To conclude, I beg your forbearance of one more quotation, this time not from the *Tiruvācakam* itself but a verse by a later devotee (Tuṟaimaṅkalam Civappirakāca Aṭikaḷ) inspired by Māṇikkavācakar's example:

If the Vedic Utterances said to be words
Of the three-eyed First-Cause
With Body shared by the resplendent bejewelled One,
Or the vocal honey which emanated from the blossomy mouth
Of the eminent One of Vaadavoor [Māṇikkavācakar]
Praised from days of yore—
If you ask which of these is the eminent one,
We have not seen anyone stand by
With eyes streaming with tears
And mind thawing and thawing and melting

While the Vedas are chanted:
But if *The Thiruvaachakam* is but once recited,
The hearers become love-filled ones,
With even granite-like mind melting and swelling up,
With the eyes, surpassing the well in sandy soil
Which, the moment it is dug overflows with water,
Welling up and gushing with tears,
With body, its hair standing on end,
Quivering in every fibre.
No one is exception to this
In this world of men.[24]

Thus, modern hearers, and by extension, I suppose, readers of the *Tiruvācakam* are ineluctably drawn into its madness. The experience expressed in Māṇikkavācakar's moving verses has been paradigmatic for Tamil-speaking devotees of Śiva over the past 1000 years. Love, spiritual and psychological freedom, transcendence of unsatisfactory "ordinary" reality—all these "acceptable" religious goals are quite likely nowhere more vividly seen than in the divine madness which Lord Śiva inspires in his devotees. Much madness is perhaps indeed divinest sense.

Notes

*Emily Dickinson, poem 435 in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1958), 1 : 337.

1. All translations of the *Tiruvācakam* are mine, based on the edition of Cuvāmi Citpavāṉantar, ed. and commentator, *Tiruvācakam* (Tirupparāyttuṟai: Śrī Rāmakiruṣṇa Tapōvaṉam, 1970). I have used the standard verse numbering system of this editor in my citations.
2. See R.A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 588-589.
3. E.g., *piccu*—8 : 2, 8 : 5, 9 : 10, 24 : 3; *piccaṉ*—5 : 96; *pittu*—47 : 6; *pittaṉ*—31 : 7; *uṉmattam*—17 : 10; *uṉmattaṉ*—32 : 3, 34 : 3; and *mattam*—47 : 6.
   Forms of *pittu*, *piccu* and *uṉmattam* are all Sanskrit derived. *Pittu* and *piccu* both stem from the Sanskrit *pitta*, meaning "bile". *Uṉmattam* derives from *unmatta*—"insane", "frantic", "intoxicated" (from *ud*+$\sqrt{mad}$—"to be or become distracted, mad").
4. Mariasusai Dhavamony says that for the Tamil Śaiva saints "*bhakti* is not merely the means of salvation, but, in its most perfect form, the essence of salvation itself. The state of liberation lies precisely in the mystical realization of one's radical orientation to, and dependence on, God". *Love of God according to Śaiva Siddhānta: A Study in the Mysticism and Theology of Śaivism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 170.
5. On Śiva's madness, in particular, and madness generally in the Hindu

tradition, see an article published after this paper was written: David Kinsley, " 'Through the Looking Glass': Divine Madness in the Hindu Religious Tradition," *History of Religions* 13, no. 4 (May 1974) : 270-305 (274-278 on Śiva). This is a very interesting essay, which argues for a number of conclusions quite similar to those made here. Kinsley's scope, however, is much broader than mine, since he is concerned not with a single *bhakta* or even a single deity or sect but with the phenomenon of madness in the entire Hindu tradition.

6. Cf. *Civañāṉapōtam sūtra* 12, which recommends the company of Śiva's devotees because others cause *aññāṉam* to arise.
7. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago : Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 140-154.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-164.
10. A.K. Ramanujan, "Structure and Anti-Structure: The Vīraśaiva Example" (lecture delivered at the meeting of the Society for South India Studies, Chambersburg, Pa., March 17, 1973). Ramanujan makes the same point in more detail in the introduction to his translations of Vīraśaiva *vacanas, Speaking of Śiva* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 29-36.
11. Louis Dumont, "World Renunciation in Indian Religions," *Religion/Politics and History in India: Collected Papers in Indian Sociology* (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1970), pp. 55-56.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
14. See *Akaṉāṉūṟu* 98 : 19, 114 : 2, 182 : 17, 242 : 11; *Puṟanāṉūṟu* 362 : 22; *Kuṟuntokai* 53 : 8, 318 : 3; and *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* 223, as cited in K. Kailasapathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 64.
15. *Veṟi* is used no fewer than five times in the *Tiruvācakam*, in each instance to describe another noun. Twice *veṟi* modifies the "flower foot" of Śiva (5 : 52; 6 : 44) and once his flowing hair (35 : 8). Another time *veṟi* simply describes a flower (3 : 90) and, finally, the mouths of bees (6 : 5). Usually in these cases translators have rendered *veṟi* as "fragrant", "fragrance", or "honey", but it seems to me that "intoxicating" would be an appropriate translation—at least in the three instances relating to Śiva. For this is how Śiva effects his devotees: he intoxicates them.
16. There is a verse in the *Tiruvācakam* which hints at a madness induced by drugs, although in interpreting this verse one imagines that Māṇikkavācakar's desire to make a pun took precedence over any intended suggestion that the poet himself used drugs to induce an ecstatic state of consciousness. The verse in question is the last of a hymn in which the devotee casts himself in the role of a girl confessing her love for Śiva to her mother. Here the word *mattam* refers to the *datura* or stramony, a plant used to produce a narcotic.

    Koṉṟai flowers and the moon,
    Vilva and datura [*mattam*],
    thickly crown His head, O mother!
    The datura [*mattam*] on His head so thickly crowned,
    is why I am so mad [*uṉmattam*] today,
    O mother·

    (17 : 10)

17. For a fuller discussion of this issue see my article "Shrines, Shamanism, and Love Poetry : Elements in the Emergence of Popular Tamil Bhakti," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41, no. 1 (March 1973): 3-17 (see especially pp. 9-13).
18. Quoted in Dhavamony, *Love of God according to Śaiva Siddhānta*, p. 157.
19. Translated in T. Issac Tambyah (trans.), *Psalms of a Śaiva Saint* (London: Luzac & Co., 1925), pp. 42, 45.
20. Quoted in C. and Hephzibah Jesudasan, *A History of Tamil Literature* (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1961), p. 99.
21. Quoted in Thomas J. Hopkins, "The Social Teaching of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*," *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*, ed. Milton Singer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 9.
22. Melville T. Kennedy, *The Chaitanya Movement: A Study of the Vaishnavism of Bengal* (Calcutta: Association Press, 1925), pp. 21-22.
23. Quoted in Edward C. Dimock, Jr., *The Place of the Hidden Moon: Erotic Mysticism in the Vaiṣṇava-sahajiyā Cult of Bengal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 115. To find the current manifestation of such ecstasy one needs only consult the publications of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami or observe his followers singing on a college campus or an urban street corner, apparently filled by devotional madness, albeit somewhat less exuberant than that of Caitanya and his immediate disciples.
24. Quoted in G. Vanmikanathan (trans.), *Pathway to God through Tamil Literature: I—Through the Thiruvaachakam* (New Delhi: Delhi Tamil Sangam, 1971), p. 102.

3

THE THEORY OF THE PHENOMENAL WORLD IN MĀṆIKKAVĀCAKAR'S *TIRUVĀCAKAM*

Lucetta Mowry

MĀṆIKKAVĀCAKAR, a Śaiva saint and gifted poet of the ninth century, was not so much philosopher or theologian as *mystic*. We cannot expect, therefore, to find in the fifty-one hymns of his *Tiruvācakam* a systematic exposition of theories about the phenomenal world. His hymns of petition and praise to Śiva are not primarily concerned with a theory about that world but are the turbulent and passionate expressions of a devotee who searched persistently, anxiously, and longingly for release from the frustrations and emptiness of earthly existence by following the way of *bhakti* (devotion). Since he had been the prime minister of a Pāṇṭiyaṉ king, the abandonment of a life of worldly fame for that of a wandering minstrel in Śiva's service must have created tensions and spiritual struggles within as well as serious misunderstanding of motives and even misgivings about his sanity among his former associates. The exultant mood of some of his poems indicates that he has conquered both inner and outer strains though the battle was not easily won. The victory was possible because of divine love which had wrenched him from attachments to sensual pleasures, intellectual and cultural enjoyments and the fame of political power. These general observations about Māṇikkavācakar's life lead us to an inescapable conclusion: that Māṇikkavācakar's view of life generally and of the phenomenal world in particular must have required of him a radical reappraisal. Since he seems to have been an individual who desired to experience the realities of life fully, his re-evaluation of these realities would not lead him to create a dispassionate metaphysical statement but a new view of how life with all its complexities could achieve a greater and more satisfying meaning for all who would be willing to see the world from this changed perspective.

That Māṇikkavācakar seems not to have been a metaphysician nor to have chosen to formulate his theories about God, man, and the world into a systematized statement does not mean that he emerged from his experience of conversion to a religious view of life without a

clear understanding of the phenomenal world, nor also that he was ignorant of theories current in his own day. His mystical and poetic treatment of the subject, however, provides difficulties for those who attempt to reconstruct his theory and to assess the significance of his insights. The resolution of these difficulties requires an interpreter not only to analyze carefully his references to the phenomenal world but also to have some knowledge of two dimensions of South Indian thought. On the one hand, one needs to have a comprehensive understanding of the theories about the phenomenal world in Māṇikkavācakar's age. These theories undoubtedly had some influence upon his thought as it was formed and expressed in his lyrics. On the other hand, one needs to know how firmly he stood in the tradition of Śaiva devotionalism and the influence of that tradition upon later systematic treatments of theories about the phenomenal world. In the former group are the great Śaiva saints: Campantar (Sambandar), Tirunāvukkaracar (Appar), and Ārūrar (Sundarar). In the latter, Meykaṇṭa is especially important because he is the first Śaiva philosopher to give in his *Śiva-jñāna-bodha* a systematic treatment of Reality which includes the basic Śaiva metaphysical theory about the phenomenal world.

In view of the foregoing, it seems advisable to summarize briefly the theories of Māṇikkavācakar's age as expressed in the documents of authors who had made a considerable impact upon the thought of his era. These theories may be discussed as three fundamentally different approaches towards an understanding of the phenomenal world: the philosophical, the mythical, and the artistic or aesthetic. Out of the philosophers' inquiries into the nature of the phenomenal world, of man, and of Ultimate Reality were produced logically defensible systems of thought. The creators of myths narrated the heroic deeds of divine and supernatural beings. From this early repertoire of stories saints and mythographers selected those narratives which served as symbols and images of a deeper reality and thus expressed their affirmations about God's nature and will as they impinged upon the world created by him. The poet responded to the varied manifestations of that created order with an artistic or aesthetic perception of its awesomeness and beauty and with a sensitive appreciation of its power and charm.

During the two centuries preceding Māṇikkavācakar's era philosophical schools were engaged in lively disputes in which the metaphysicians of South India were active participants. Two schools

in particular gained large followings because of their persuasive arguments on metaphysical issues such as the means of knowledge, Ultimate Reality, the soul, and the phenomenal world. The most articulate of one of these schools, Advaita Vedānta, was Śaṅkara (A.D. 788-820) a native of Kerala who was an uncompromising monist. Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan cites a half verse which succinctly sums up Śaṅkara's philosophy of non-dualistic monism. "The Absolute Spirit is the reality; the world of appearance is illusory; the so-called individual soul is the Absolute itself, and no other."[1] Śaṅkara's numerous philosophical works (the most important of which are commentaries on earlier Vedic texts), explain his position. Brahman (the Absolute Spirit) alone is real and the self as well as the phenomenal world, limited by space and time and subject to cause and change, is illusory but appears to be real because of the principle called *māyā*. From the relative point of view *māyā* is that mysterious power which both conceals the real and projects the unreal. The ignorant do not realize that the plurality of the phenomenal world, including the Supreme God known by any name, has been superimposed upon Brahman and hides it "even as smoke that rises from the fire hides the blaze for a time." Since the Absolute Spirit is completely dissociated from matter, the phenomenal world is merely an amusing sport (*līlā*) and exists as long as the illusory dream of its reality persists.[2]

The second major metaphysical development which provides the philosophical structure for many other systems of thought was Saṁkhya. In contrast to Advaita Vedānta it argued for a dualistic view of reality because it regarded both Spirit (*puruṣa*) and Nature or Matter (*prakṛti*) to be two distinct and fundamental realities. In this system Spirit which is of the nature of pure consciousness is multiple and each soul becomes associated in various ways with Matter. On the other hand, Matter is unconscious, inert and one. The interaction of these two basic realities starts the process of evolution from Matter, beginning with primary principles which eventually produce the finite things of the phenomenal world. The Sāṁkhya theory may be illustrated by a few quotations from its earliest text, the *Saṅkhyakārikā* of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa.

> "Primal Nature is not an evolute—The spirit is neither evolvent nor evolute—The association of the two, which is like that of a lame man and a blind one, is for the (dual) purpose of Primal

> Nature being contemplated by the Spirit, and the release of the Spirit (from three-fold misery), from this (association) creation proceeds."[3]

From these two influential and radically different philosophical traditions of Māṇikkavācakar's era we turn to the second approach current in his day, that of the mythographers' understanding of the phenomenal world.

By the time the mythographers recorded the stories about the gods, which are familiar to us from the Epics and *Purāṇas*, they had already received a repertoire of narratives, the selection and details of which they altered in the developing tradition of Indian mythology.[4] The theogony of the myths gave pre-eminence to three gods: Brahmā the Creator, Viṣṇu the Sustainer, and Śiva or Rudra, the Destroyer. During the Epic-Purānic period Viṣṇu and Śiva, two lesser deities of the *Ṛg-veda*, rose to ascendancy in capturing the loyalty of devotees. In the *Purāṇas* generally associated with Śaiva sectarian groups Śiva gains supremacy by assuming the powers of both Brahmā and Viṣṇu. According to the cosmogonic view of the Śaiva mythographers the phenomenal world was divided into regions or stories to which were allocated various inhabitants. In Yamaloka, the netherworld, Yama (Death) ruled over the souls of those who had completed their earthly existence. Śivaloka (Śiva's heaven) where Śiva sat enthroned with his consort Pārvatī or Umā on the high peak of Mt. Kailāsa, was the top-most story. Here Śiva ruled supreme over gods and the souls of men who had been liberated from the cycle of births. In the area between "heaven" and "hell" lived mortals and other animate beings who were involved in the struggles of their present earthly existence. Though Śiva's sovereignty was more clearly manifested in the uppermost story, his power extended even to the netherworld as the myth about Śiva's kicking Yama to death and then restoring him to a purified state demonstrates.

The third approach towards an understanding of nature is the artistic or aesthetic appreciation of its beauty. The poets of the classical or *Caṅkam* period constructed their bardic lays on the themes of love (*akam*) and of heroism (*puṟam*) according to extraordinarily elaborate, complex and subtle theories.[5] In their poems on love, particularly those on well-matched relationships of the lovers, aspects of natural phenomena became an important and integral element of artistic expression, as basic for the poet as the colors on

the painter's palette. Well-matched relationships involved lovers in five phases of the experience of love. For each phase there was an appropriate period of time with respect to seasons and hours of the day as well as an appropriate stage setting in nature. The latter was designated by regions or areas where particular deities were revered. A simplified chart indicating the correspondence of the five phases of love to natural settings, to times and seasons, and to the deities may be the clearest means of grasping this aspect of poetic convention.

Experiences of love	*Region*	*Season*	*Time*	*Deity*
1. Union of lovers	hills or mountains	cold season	night	Murukaṉ
2. Patient waiting	forest	rainy season	evening	Māyōn
3. Infidelity of lovers	cultivated fields	all seasons	dawn	Vēntaṉ
4. Separation of lovers	sea-coast	all seasons	sunrise	Varuṇa
5. Elopement	waste-land, desert	summer	midday	Kālī (Durgā or Āditya, the Sun-god)

In addition to this general scheme the poets followed detailed conventions which were associated with these five poetic situations: appropriate animals, birds, trees, occupations and musical instruments. Within this highly schematized pattern the poet by alluding to a heron standing motionless near a lovely pond with its broad green lotus leaves used the metaphor for a much larger picture. The poetic situation is the infidelity of lovers with its natural setting in cultivated fields at dawn of any season and a passing allusion to the god Indra. The phenomenal world, then, as conceived by the poet is realistic with respect to time and space and becomes the backdrop or the stage setting for the dramatic expressions of love. It is concretely represented by a few suggestive strokes of the poet's pen and is, to some extent, theistically understood insofar as deities are associated with specified regions. As Zvelebil points out, the poem *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*, ("Guide to Lord Muruku"), written in the late classical period, reflects a greater interest in the gods and marks a transition from the earlier bardic lays on love to later devotional poetry of the Śaiva saints.

An understanding of Māṇikkavācakar's theory about the phenomenal world requires not only the review of the major insights of predecessors but also a brief resumé of the principal development in the Śaiva tradition after his time. That major development was

the systematic treatment of Śaiva doctrines begun by Meykaṇṭa in his brief work, *Śiva-jñāna-bodha*. This second vantage point too will contribute to the perspective needed for our examination of Māṇikkavācakar's view of the world and thus to a clearer understanding of his place in the Śaiva tradition.

Meykaṇṭa indicates that the Śaiva system involves three closely related, eternal and real categories: the Lord Śiva (*pati*), souls (*paśu*; Tamil: *pacu*) and bonds (*pāśa*; Tamil: *pāca*); all three of which have varying associations with the phenomenal world. Though all these realities are eternal, Śiva is the Ultimate Reality and is related to the phenomenal world as the efficient cause, while his power or energy (*Śakti*) is the instrumental cause. *Māyā* is the material cause and has two forms. The unmanifest form which is an eternal, imperceptible, single or partless reality constitutes the substratum from which the phenomenal world is evolved. This phenomenal world is the stage on which the soul plays out its drama, one which not only limits and binds the soul but especially makes possible a training of the soul whereby it can ultimately come to a realization of its own nature. Souls (*paśu*) are inherently eternal, pure, all-knowing but are deluded into thinking that they are finite, limited, and ignorant. The first task of the soul is to recognize its condition, then to take steps to remove its limitations with the help of Śiva's grace and finally to come to a realization of its true nature and destiny. The ultimate destiny is union with the Lord Śiva, which means a state of togetherness with God and a sharing in God's nature, namely in his infinitude and omniscience.

To explain the psychic-physical order of the phenomenal world the Śaiva philosopher modified the Sāṁkhya theory of evolutes (*tattvas*). In this earlier scheme Matter (*prakṛti*), the single, inert *prius* of the world became the many and consists of three substances or constituents, which are not perceived but inferred from their effects. These three strands (*guṇas*) are called *sattva* ("intelligence-stuff"), *rajas* ("energy-stuff"), and *tamas* ("mass-stuff").[6] When these substances are in equal balance no evolution takes place. But when a disturbance, caused by the interaction of *puruṣa* and the *guṇas* takes place, then the process of evolution from primal matter begins. Though the Śaiva Siddhāntin uses this ontological and cosmological explanation of the world, he must modify this earlier theory in one major respect because his theistic affirmations require that the Lord Śiva be related to the whole process to liberate souls from that

process. For the Siddhāntin the process includes the assertion that the world is the embodiment of three hostile forces or bonds (*malas*) which oppose the Lord and souls: *māyā*, *karma* and *āṇava*.

The Siddhāntin, therefore, does not begin the process of evolution with *prakṛti* but with *māyā*, which is not the Advaitic principle of illusion but the primal, eternal, material (pure and impure) cause of the phenomenal world. The pure evolutes (*tattvas*) are five in number and, though inert, are intelligent because of their association with Śiva, and, according to Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, "serve a double purpose of providing locations for the divinities that are directly responsible for the course of evolution from *aśuddha-* (impure-) *māyā* and also of serving as stages of the return of souls to Śiva."[7] Though the doctrine about *māyā* is significant philosophically because it provides an explanation for the origin of psychic and physical phenomena, it is even more important soteriologically because it is a bond from which the soul, if it is to realize its true nature, must be freed. The second bond, *āṇava*, a limited idea or ignorance of the soul's true nature, is clearly the "original sin" not only because it obscures intelligence but also because it leads the soul from union with God to thoughts of its egoity and to the performance of deeds, good and bad. Consequently, the soul becomes fettered by the third bond, *karma*. Meykaṇṭa's understanding of the world, therefore, is one which subsumes ontology and cosmology into the larger soteriological issue. Furthermore, since the liberation of the soul is a liberation from something, that from which it is liberated must be real and powerful if the liberating force is truly effective. For this reason Meykaṇṭa states in the tenth and eleventh sutras of the *Siva-jñāna-bodha* that the Lord makes the soul see its true nature and thus enables it to escape from the detrimental effects of the three *malas* (*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*) and to become one with the Lord.

As we begin our examination of Māṇikkavācakar's views on the phenomenal world, we are probably correct in assuming that they were not unrelated to those of his predecessors and that he did not present a completely new understanding of cosmos. Furthermore, he readily admitted his indebtedness to those who had already contributed to the development of the Śaiva sectarian cult. In his poetry he expresses his sincere and earnest desire to be included in the company of Śaiva devotees and it was his firm belief that Śiva himself in the form of a *Guru* had brought about his conversion to Śaivism and had instructed him in its doctrines. We may expect,

therefore, that the insights of such Śaiva saints as Tirumūlar, Campantar (Sambandar), Tirunāvukkaracar (Appar), and Ārūrar (Sundarar) had influenced his philosophical and religious understanding of God, man, and the world. Selected lines from his fourth hymn in the *Tiruvacākam* express this basic conviction with vivid force and power.

> Neighbors—close friends all—gathered round
> And talked atheism
> till their tongues became calloused.
>
> .. ..
>
> Sectarian disputants,
> claiming their respective creeds only as perfect,
> clamorously clashed (with each other).
> The tornado called staunch *maayam-vaadam*—
> (the dogma that the world is but an empty dream)—
> swirled and blew and roared,
> the while the conflicting cultural deadly poison
> of "Epicurianism"—the dazzling doughty snake—
> came and joined forces.
> While thereby, several great delusions
> encompassed the contemplatives,
> they swerved not,
> but unflaggingly held on to their faith.
>
> .. ..
>
> Not thinking of another god even in a dream,
> not despising as a little thing
> the greatness of the grace of Him of unique heaven
> in coming down on earth and becoming Guru supreme,
> His sacred twin feet,
> like their shadow which,
> now fore, now aft, but never knows separation,
> They never grew tired of.[8]

Here Māṇikkavācakar critically appraises the view of the world ranging from the Advaitin to the "Epicurean" and affirms the central and controlling convictions of the Śaiva devotees, namely that Śiva, their Lord, is very much concerned with the lot of men in his world.

Like the poets of the classical period of Tamil literature Māṇikkavācakar was sensitive to the beauties of the world in which he lived. He described these with a craftsman's skill in the use of imagery and

metaphor. His descriptions of things heard and seen at dawn are especially charming. The "cool sharp brilliance" of the stars fade away and become dulled by the rising of the sun with its "eye-dazzling" rays. The light of dawn makes the lotus-abounding water sparkle "like the clusters of gems on the crowns of the heavenly ones" (7 : 17-18). The young girls who are bathing in its cool, churned water are adorned with gold ornaments and flowers in their hair while a swarm of bees sway in unison (7 : 13-14). One also hears the sounds of early morning, the crowing of cocks and the first chirping of birds (7 : 8, 20 : 2-3). In his hymn on the "Golden Swing" (Hymn 16) the poet sketches the scene of young girls swinging on "the beautiful golden plank which has lovely coral as struts and (strung) pearls as ropes". The metaphors describing the girls are chosen to evoke the sight of a garden with its swans, peacocks and groves of trees. In the spring one can hear the sweet call of the blue cuckoo in the mango groves (Hymn 18) and see the emerald-colored parrots flying about in a garden of flowers.

Generally, these references to the beauties of the world serve the allegorical purpose of describing Śiva's character and deeds or of those of the poet. In contrast to the "boiling, torrential waters of the vast Ganga" on which the crescent moon tosses like a small boat in Śiva's matted locks Māṇikkavācakar compares himself to a "small fish gone limp on the vast waters ceasing to be" (6 : 26). Śiva strikes his drum with a booming sound that fills the cosmos (19 : 8) while the poet, a *karma*-ridden one, seeks a hole to escape the five-mouthed snake (the five senses) which by its attacks strikes terror in Māṇikkavācakar's mind (6 : 35). One concludes from these few examples of metaphors that Māṇikkavācakar uses imagery familiar to him from the works of earlier poets but that the formal conventions of love poetry, indicated above, no longer obtain. To support this suggestion we note that in Hymn 21 Māṇikkavācakar speaks of himself as a wearied crane or heron seeking its prey. The allusion to the heron, were conventional traditions followed, would be a signal to the reader or listener to expect a landscape of the cultivated countryside, dawn as the time of day, a reference to Indra, and that phase of the experience of love found in the lover's infidelity. In the case of Māṇikkavācakar's poem the deity can be none other than Śiva who is the ruler of all the gods including Indra. The landscape is possibly the seashore, mentioned in stanza 5, and specifically the shores of Tillai where the hymn presumably was composed. The

lovers' experiencing some phase of their emotional relationship are Śiva and Māṇikkavācakar and the emotional relationship experienced seems to be one of anxiety and separation rather than of infidelity of the lover, though this may be the emotion spoken of by the poet when he questions the worthiness of Śiva's actions and speaks of himself as "the unappreciative fellow of unmelting heart" (21 : 3).

Our understanding of Māṇikkavācakar's view of the world must include not only his portrayal of its lovely, idyllic scenes, a world in which beautifully formed young girls play their innocent games, but also his judgment of some of its aspects which he regards as evil, treacherous, pretentious, fraudulent, deceitful, insane and unreal (5 : 95, 10 : 6, 5 : 100, 41 : 1). It is a world in which he finds himself "thinking only of deceitful and degrading things done by women with copious tresses and beautiful eyes like those of the *keṇṭai* fish" is "stunned by the eyes of women of dark tresses," and "is doing things agreeable to vacuous women and wandering in their company like a dog with a worm-infested head" (41 : 10, 4, 9). Though the fawn-like glances of women battered him like waves of a storm, they were not the only reason for his feeling of being "engulfed on this earth in the sea called (worldly) life" (41 : 1), or being "caught in the whirlpool of sorrow", or "attacked by the shark called lust" (24 : 4). Life from conception to the grave presented many dangers. For the unborn child each month in the womb was hazardous (4 : 14-25). During one's present existence one must struggle against the dangers of hunger, sleepless nights, the predatory glances of women, the "rutting elephant called desire", learning, wealth, poverty and false sectarian creeds (4 : 26-27). The chief causes of jeopardy were the sense of egoity, desire, *karma* and ignorance. In this kind of world he had deemed his small, *karma*-laden hut of a body raised on the dense darkness of ignorance to be a thing of worth. But in reality it was nothing but a "garment of brain and bones tied together by closely wound thongs of white sinews and covered with skin" (25 : 2), a "pus-exuding, fly-infested, dirt-overlaid, walking little dwelling" of his soul (25 : 2) and a "foul-smelling carcass" in which he is "aging in vain with frustration" (32 : 2, cf. 6 : 41 and 24 : 1). Harassed by his five senses he feels like "a small shrub underfoot in a fierce elephant fight" (6 : 21). With this pessimistic view of the world it is no wonder that he has no interest in tarrying here (5 : 18).

How does one reconcile Māṇikkavācakar's two extreme and radically opposed views of the world, his pessimistic appraisal with his appreciation of its beauties? As the poet indicates, the primary cause for this tension involves Śiva's relation to the world. Without his presence the cosmos is a vile, vast emptiness. Feeling abandoned by Śiva, the poet has the sensation of perishing, yet, unfortunately, he continues to live without dying (5 : 18-19). 'With Śaiva's presence the world is infused with meaning. To realize Śiva's presence man must die to self for egoity and love are mutually exclusive. By his gracious act of love Śiva desires to transform the darkness of the soul's ignorance, the evil effects of its deeds and the selfish, stony heart (22 : 1-3). The world, then, without Śiva's gracious love, is of no value and hence unreal, but the world which allows Śiva's love to enter into every crevice is the real in the fullest sense of the term.

Note that the weapon He wields
is the trident which darts upon the three malams,
that those who beseech Him
may not be tainted by the malams
and that their hearts may melt.

(19 : 7, cf. 2 : 110)

Oh You who have been called up
by the Flood of grace, Our King,
Unceasingly mingling with the heart of us paltry ones,
dissolves it into Experience—
Oh You who have been so called up
and have lovingly become His slaves,
come and gather together.
Behold! The time has come to go—leaving the unreal—
and enter the haven of the feet of our Owner.

Let go all the totally unnecessary things.
(For) those who have affiliated themselves
with the merciful One—
Who openly entering the earth
has enslaved curs like us—
will remain inflexible, self abiding in the Self.

(45 : 1-2, cf. 8 : 12).

As these passages indicate, the transformation occurs because Śiva has purged the hearts of those who beseech him of the three *mala*-s by His powerful trident. Stripped of these, the hearts of men are exposed to Śiva's melting love so that He can mingle with them.

This sublime experience had changed Māṇikkavācakar's understanding of bondage. No longer was he enslaved to the *mala*-s or even to the most beautiful and bewitching things of this world. Once he had become Śiva's slave and entered the haven of His Owner's feet he could relinquish his hold upon the unreal values of the world and become attached to the reality of Śiva. The experience gave Māṇikkavācakar a new perspective. Unattached to the things of this world he could see them for what they really were. Māṇikkavācakar's view of the world, therefore, is not that of the earlier poets who see its varied landscapes as regions for the experiences of human love with its longings, desires and frustrations. The world, which is Śiva's domain, is the place where the Lord and man meet and where, if man accepts the Lord's love, he will shed unreality to become Reality and thus never become entangled again in karmic birth (1 : 84-88).[9]

In our discussion so far we have examined Māṇikkavācakar's concept of the phenomenal world from the point of view of his work as a poet whose predecessors had developed highly conventional forms of lyrics on the theme of love. The poet using this literary genre is one who experiences a great range of emotions, from ecstatic joy to abysmal despair. Māṇikkavācakar's experiences also involve him fully in life with its miseries and joys but having become a spiritual individual he expresses these emotions in terms of "bridal mysticism" which has as its main theme the intimacy of the relationship between the Lord and his devotees.

Since love poetry of the classical age was, by and large, descriptive rather than speculative and since it was primarily concerned with the psychic elements of nature such as the heart, mind, and individualizing egoity, it does not provide adequate views about the phenomenal world for a religious poet. For this more penetrating insight Māṇikkavācakar and his fellow saints could draw upon the theories of mythographers and philosophers. From them he would find the images and language to express his own ideas about the origin and nature of the world conceived as a unity and as revealing systematic order and harmony. We turn, therefore, to those references in the *Tiruvācakam* which express his religious understanding of the world and of Śiva's relation to it.

As we indicated above, Śiva is the Owner of the world and of souls and both have meaning when associated with Śiva's presence. One reason for this, according to Māṇikkavācakar, is that Śiva in some

very real sense appears to be the world and its energizer. He is, apparently, not only the One but also the Many in its various forms, even when those forms are in opposition to each other. He is, on the one hand, the Whole One (6 : 29), the Effulgence, who becomes everything and nothing, and the Dense Darkness. He is the One who has the distinction of having no birth and is the Beginning, the Middle and the End and yet none of these. In such contexts which refer to Śiva as the Transcendent One it is interesting to note that Māṇikkavācakar can also refer to Śiva in personal terms. He is the Father and noble Lord who pulled the poet to himself (1 : 71-74). On the other hand, Māṇikkavācakar speaks of Śiva as the Many. He is the Vedas and the sacrifices, the real and the unreal, enlightenment and dark ignorance, sorrow and bliss, the half and the whole, the first and the last (9 : 20). The relationship of the One with Many is stated in a variety of ways in his poems. Śiva is the first Principle, the merciful Transcendent One who contains in himself the aspect of each and every being and became the sole Being who conceals his fiery form of limitless glory (2 : 92-99). He is male, female, and neuter, ether and a pillar of fire (5 : 29). He became the heavens and earth, the wind and light, flesh and life, being and not being, the King of "those who speak of I and Mine" (5 : 15). Becoming the five elements he is the one

> Who, becoming beginning to all beings
> has no beginning for Himself
> Who becoming the end of all beings
> has no end for Himself
> Who, intermingling in the five senses
> without them intermingling in Him.
>
> (5 : 70)

In 31 : 10 Māṇikkavācakar states this idea more inclusively when he says that Śiva became the five elements, the senses, sense-objectives and all diversified things in the world. He is seed for the world and yet is something beyond the world. Though greater than, other than, and beyond the world he came "in his grace here on earth along with her (Pārvatī) of fragrance-filled flower-like tresses" and came both as the formless one and as "Vedas-chanting Brahmin" to assume lordship over Māṇikkavācakar (10 : 14-15). Though immanent in everything, he is beyond all that he fills (1 : 23). He transcends the world including space and time, words and phrases (32 : 6, 1 : 39).

Though he is the five elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and ether, —he is of a nature that never knows weariness, never wastes away and exists even if ether were to vanish, wind to die, and fire, water and earth to disappear (11 : 18). Though inherent in creatures like the sweet music of the *viṇa*, he is not created, is uncaused and has no life-span (3 : 35, 1 : 37-40).

Māṇikkavācakar also affirms that Śiva not only pervades all phenomena (22 : 7) but also endows them with their finest essence. These essences, being aspects of Śiva's nature, make possible their sharing in his nature. To the rising sun Śiva gives effulgence, to the moon coolness, to fire heat, to ether pervasiveness, to the wind energy, to streams sweet savor, and to the earth firmness (3 : 19-44). He is the self-generating Light whose effulgence not only illumines cosmic darkness but also dispels the dark gloom of ignorance. He is the Life of the World (20 : 9) which gives to the cosmos not merely dynamic, animate existence but a power to exist in the full sense of the term, for Śiva, being the ancient sea of bliss, the cloud and lightning of beauty and Supreme Knowledge imparts these qualities to his created order (3 : 66-70). Again, Māṇikkavācakar reveals his absorbing concern with redemption and therefore subsumes ontology into his larger view of soteriology.

The myths about Śiva suggest two productive approaches toward an understanding of how the One may be related to the Many. One is found in those stories which associate Śiva with his consort Pārvatī, the second in those narratives which associate him with the triad of Hindu deities: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. We turn our attention first to Māṇikkavācakar's view of Śiva's relationship with his consort Pārvatī and to the later clarification of the significance of this relationship by the Śaiva philosophers.

When Māṇikkavācakar speaks of Śiva's relationship with Pārvatī, he is clearly interested in her as the Lord's partner, that awe-inspiring goddess, called the Queen of women (12 : 13), who was the mountain King's precious daughter and is seated in state with Śiva on Mt. Kailās (36 : 10). Other mythological references mention that she had been born out of fire among the great seafaring people (43 : 3, 8) and that she had been rescued from danger by Śiva. Rarely does Māṇikkavācakar speak of her as the destructive Kālī with her "flesh-clinging spear" (12 : 14).[10] For Māṇikkavācakar Pārvatī of "flawless age-long fame" is primarily the model woman especially with respect to her physical features. She has curly, cardamom

scented tresses, gentle fawn-like eyes, or blue lotus-like colored eyes to which collyrium has been applied, or eyes surpassing the *kayal*, or like the split surface of a tender mango. She has bamboo-like shapely shoulders, closely-set, tender, tightly-laced, buxom, cupped breasts, a narrow waist like that of a creeper or a flower stalk, "soft ball-caressing" fingers (the ball apparently being made of flowers) and feet softer than cotton. Her speech is melodious, like music, and parrot-like in its softness. This aspect of Śiva's relationship with Pārvatī, which recalls the language of the earlier love poetry, is used by Māṇikkavācakar to argue against the ascetic way of life. If Śiva had not felt a desire for a woman, "all those in this vast earth would have taken to austerities, seeking heaven, and would have perished" (12 : 9). Though Śiva assumes the guise of an ascetic when he takes on the form of a beggar asking for souls, Pārvatī is a part of him (17 : 9). But she is not the only one for other devotees share with her the experience of union with Śiva (7 : 10).

This statement shifts Pārvatī's significance from a model woman to a model devotee who can also speak of Śiva as his Spouse (45 : 2, 50 : 2), as his Bridegroom (49 : 3), and as his Beloved (49 : 4). Pārvatī was the first to listen to the Lord expound the Āgamas created by him and to experience the pleasures of union with him who "showered unstinting, lavish sweet grace" (2 : 7-14, cf. 21 : 1). This now leads us to consider another aspect of Pārvatī. She shares in Śiva's desire and action to save the world.

> He and His Lady who is a part of Him
> thus graciously came
> that the world may be redeemed.
>
> (2 : 26-27)

> The cosmic sound of the Onkhaaraa
> from the great drum
> of the very great Lord of mercy
> with the Dame as one half of Him
> was resounding everywhere.
>
> (2 : 106-109)

In a union described either as mutual indwelling (21 : 1) or as an impression of the goddess stamped upon Śiva (29 : 5), Pārvatī comes with Him to bestow grace upon created beings and enters with Him into the ancient huts of their devotees (20 : 8, cf. 9 : 2, 10 : 10, 11 : 6, 41 : 4-6).

In these affirmations Māṇikkavācakar shows his basic concern about the redemption of the world. The relationship of Śiva with Pārvatī, however, led to philosophical speculation about how the uncaused, autonomous, independent, absolute, eternal Primal One of Supreme Wisdom might be related to the non-intelligent, dependent, contingent and changing phenomenal world. Meykaṇṭa addresses himself to this problem in the second *sūtra* of the *Śiva-jñāna-bodha*.

> God, Who is one with souls, Who is different from them, and Who is the Indweller and Prime Mover of all, gives to souls through His Śakti with which He stands in an inseparable relation, the results of good and bad deeds through which the soul experiences births and deaths.

In the previous *sūtra* Meykaṇṭa had argued that the world required some force or agent outside of itself to bring it into being. In this *sūtra* he maintains that the Lord operates through his *śakti*, who is inseparably related to him and who is the instrumental cause of natural phenomena, *māyā* being the material cause and the Lord being the efficient cause; the clay like *māyā* is the material cause, the potter's wheel like *śakti* is the instrumental cause. Later Śaiva philosophers elaborate Meykaṇṭa's theory by speaking of five *śaktis* all of which are the Lord's energizing powers.[12]

In this *sūtra* Meykaṇṭa has stated two important doctrines. The first clarifies what Māṇikkavācakar meant when he said that men blunder in their affirmations that God is many (possibly a reference to the Jain belief in the atomic structure of the universe) or that He is One (possibly a reference to the Advaitin position that Brahman alone is real and the world is an illusory appearance). According to Meykaṇṭa, as he reflected on the affirmations of the Śaiva saints, the correct view is neither the One nor the Many but a view which apprehends a relationship of the One-and-Many. The relationship is an intimate union of two distinct and independent entities. God is transcendent and untouched by the exigencies of the phenomenal world. But He is related to it through His energy or *śakti*. The second important doctrinal statement is that the purpose of His relationship with the phenomenal world is the redemption of souls. In the process of evolution the soul is given the opportunity in its births and deaths to find its release from the three *mala*-s and to realize its true nature.

The second set of early mythological stories which provide Māṇikkavācakar with suggestive insights into Śiva's relationship with the phenomenal order is the narration of deeds performed by the triad of Hindu deities. As John Piet suggests, the three prominent gods of Hinduism: Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra or Śiva, probably enjoyed a status of equality in South India until the Jains and Buddhists seriously questioned the existence of any deity and gained such a popular following that Hinduism was threatened. In the ensuing religious conflict adherents of their chosen deities responded along sectarian lines.[13] Among Śaivites one of the most familiar mythological stories, frequently referred to by the Tevāram saints and Māṇikkavācakar, was the account of Śiva's transformation of himself into a pillar of fire which extended from the depths of the nether world through the heights of heaven.[14] With arrogant bravado Viṣṇu, becoming a boar, claimed that he could dig his way through the earth to find the base of this awesome column. Brahmā in the form of a swan thought he could fly to the top. Had they succeeded they could claim that Śiva was a limited god. They met with defeat, however, and Śiva's greatness was attested to by the two contenders for the position of ultimate authority and power. Of Māṇikkavācakar's many references to the episode we quote the following lines:

> What is the meaning of your Lord
> standing as a pillar of fire,
> reaching from the nether regions to the skies,
> that Brahma and Vishnu may not know Him?
> Reaching from the nether regions to the skies,
> had he not stood so (that day),
> both of them on account of their altercation between them,
> would never have shed their egotism.
>
> (12 : 6)

More important for our discussion are two passages from the *Tiruvācakam* in which Māṇikkavācakar states that Śiva is superior to Viṣṇu and Brahmā, because he alone is capable of performing the functions of creation, preservation, and destruction. Since Śiva subsumes the function of destruction he stands supreme because only the destroyer remains to re-create and preserve the world.

> Deva-devan Whom the King of the devas (Indra)
> does not know,
> He who creates, protects

and destroys the verdant world,
The primeval One
Who stands as the king of the Trinity
the Image (of all things)
Father of my forefathers,
My father with one part (of His body)
lorded over by a Dame!
everyone's Monarch,
He came and enslaved me!
We are no one's subjects! Nothing we fear!
We have joined the slaves of His slaves!
Let us dive deeper and deeper (in the pool of bliss),
and sport about!

(5 : 30)

He is the ancient One
Who creates the creators of the entire Universe;
He is the God Who guards those
who guard the creatures;
He is the One Who withdraws into Himself
those who have been guarded;
He is the mindful One Who is unmindful—
(till the appointed time)—
of those whom He had withdrawn.

(3 : 13-16)

Meykaṇṭa in the first *sūtra* of the *Śiva-jñāna-bodha* uses this theme to prove the existence of God and has not neglected Māṇikkavācakar's stress on Śiva's mercy and grace.

> The Sages say that the world which is perceived as 'he', 'she', and 'it' is subject to the cyclical process of evolution, existence in form and involution. The Agent of the involution is likewise the Agent of evolution, because the world must evolve by the power of the one Who caused it to disappear. The world evolves in order that the *āṇava mala* of souls may be worn away.[15]

The basic argument is that *māyā*, the material cause of the world, does not have within itself the capability of creating, preserving or destroying itself. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra are likewise inadequate to fulfil these functions because they will disappear in the process of involution. Śiva alone is the Agent and in this respect Śiva, as Piet correctly points out, makes Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra appear as his energy or *śakti*.[16]

Māṇikkavācakar's theory about the phenomenal world shows him to be a discerning eclectic. Like the poets of the classical period he responded to the beauties of a real world which was the stage where the drama of love was played. This real world was not limited, however, to specified regions but was of cosmic proportions over which Śiva was Sovereign. The drama was enacted on this larger stage between the Divine Lover and his devotees who were a real part of that real world. Māṇikkavācakar's response to the varied manifest objects of the world was determined by his sense of relationship with the Lover. When Māṇikkavācakar became enmeshed in worldly pleasure, he was overcome with grief because his attachment to things of the world removed him from the Lord. But the realization of Śiva's presence in the world, especially in the hearts of his devotees, filled him with ecstatic joy. The incredible marvel was that Śiva, who could be thought of as the Transcendent One or as the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the world, had given himself fully to Māṇikkavācakar and other devotees (22 : 10). This act of self-giving love was incomprehensible in human terms because men expected something of worth in return for the gift. Śiva had given infinite Bliss. Compared with this gift whatever the devotee could give in return would be of little, if any, value. Though other Śaiva saints had similarly experienced God's love and responded to it, Māṇikkavācakar made this the unforgettable focal point of the Śaiva understanding of life.

This doctrine of love was undergirded by affirmations taken from philosophical speculation or mythological stories. One could call Śiva the Primal One or by any other term of Absolute significance provided the designation was understood within the context of God's love manifested towards his creation. He could be thought of as the pillar of fire, the destroyer of the Tripura, or the drinker of poison provided these myths were interpreted to demonstrate Śiva's love for gods and human beings. Śiva may be, therefore, the One who transcends the world, or he may be one with the world, or he may in his various forms be associated with gods and men in the celestial and terrestrial regions. However one may conceive of Śiva or represent him, his relationship with the world was an expression of his love for it.

Since the myths could easily be interpreted to illustrate this basic conviction, Māṇikkavācakar frequently alludes to them. Those most useful for demonstrating Śiva's relationship to the world are

the stories about this association with the Hindu "trinity" because they stress Śiva's superiority which Māṇikkavācakar interprets as a superiority of gracious love. Pārvati's role is that of Śiva's beautiful consort who aids him in his redemptive work of love. Her union with Śiva serves as a message of hope for all his devotees. She has not yet become a principle of energy operating out of the Absolute. The philosophical attributions of such terms as Transcendent One to Śiva have not suggested to Māṇikkavācakar problems about how the One may be related to the Many in a speculative system. In these passages Māṇikkavācakar tends to set the impersonal and personal affirmations about God in parallel but causally unrelated constructions. Immediately after affirming that Śiva is the Transcendent, Effulgent One, he declares Śiva to be a loving Father who has redeemed one as lowly as Māṇikkavācakar believes himself to be.

It is clear, therefore, that Māṇikkavācakar speaks of the phenomenal world not as a philosopher but as a mystic poet. His religious experience had convinced him that the world was the real stage on which the drama of salvation was enacted and for this reason he was unable to accept Śaṅkara's theory about the illusory nature of the world. His task had been that of Śiva's minstrel who, having experienced the incredible grace of God, wished to make the stony hearts of men melt with love for the Lord. The task of the philosopher to provide a logically defensible treatment of Māṇikkavācakar's insights was to come later. When it was undertaken, the Śaiva Siddhāntins were compelled by the force of that basic experience to search for a metaphysical system which affirmed the reality of the phenomenal world. The most readily adaptable theory was that of Saṁkhya philosophy which they modified to express the Śaiva view of the Lord's relation to man and his world.

Notes

1. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Homage to Śaṅkara* (Madras : Ganesh and Co., 1959), p. 30. See also *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana with Commentary by Śaṅkara*, Vols. XXXIV and XXXVIII in *The Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890 and 1896), M.K. Venkatarama Iyer, *Advaita Vedānta according to Śaṅkara* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1964), S. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1932), pp. 406-494, and S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931), II. 445-658.

2. In his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad and Kārikā* Śaṅkara gives one of the clearest statements of his philosophical theories. On his statement about creation see, for example, I, 7 : "those who theorize about creation think that creation is the expansion of God. Those who are intent on the supreme truth, however, do not support (any theory of) creation." T.M.P. Mahadevan's translation in *Readings from Śaṅkara* (Part Two) (Madras : Ganesh and Co., 1961), p. 18. For a translation of the entire work see *Eight Upaniṣads* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1958) II 173-404. See also, S. Radhakrishnan, *The Brahmā Sūtra* (London : George Allen and Unwin, 1960), pp. 37-38, 329-330, 356, 361, 402-3. It should also be noted that though Śaṅkara was an absolute non-dualist in his metaphysics, he composed hymns to Viṣṇu, Śurya, Śiva, Śakti, Pārvatī and other deities, and encouraged worship of the liṅga. However, this type of worship, according to Śaṅkara, does not bring final release for the individual soul which can only find it through an intuitive apprehension of the identity of the self with Brahman.
3. Selected passages from the *Sāṅkhyakārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa* (3rd cent. A.D.), edited and translated by S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri (Madras: University of Madras, 1935), pp. 7 and 45.
4. This is discernible from the variation in details of episodes about the gods as well as in the purpose for which they were narrated. A recent study of the historical development of Indian mythology has been made by Sukumari Bhattacharji in her book, *The Indian Theogony* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970). She discusses the gods of the Śiva group on pp. 23-207. See also, Glenn E. Yocum, "Sign and Paradigm: Myth in Tamil Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Bhakti Poetry", *Structural Approaches to South India,* ed. Harry M. Buck and Glenn E. Yocum. (Chambersburg: Conococheaque Associates, Inc. 1974).
5. For a detailed discussion of these theories and the poetic conventions of this period see Kamil Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan.* (Leiden : E. J. Brill, 1973), pp. 1-183. See also, R. Balakrishna Mudaliyar, *The Golden Anthology of Ancient Tamil Literature* I-III (Madras: South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1960).
6. S. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy.* (Cambridge: University Press, 1932), I, 244.
7. T.M.P. Mahadevan, "The Idea of God in Saiva Siddhanta," *Collected Lectures on Saiva Siddhanta* (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1965), p. 6 of Lecture 7.
8. Hymn 4 : 54-8. O.G. Vanmikanathan, trans. *Pathway to God through Tamil Literature:* 1. *Through the Thiruvaachakam.* (New Delhi: Delhi Tamil Sangam, 1971), pp. 150-52. Other passages quoted throughout this paper are from this translation.
9. In Hymn 3 Māṇikkavācakar describes how Śiva injected through every fiber of his carnal body and into the cavities of his bones the marvellous ambrosia which melted his heart. Thereby Śiva fashioned for him a "new form, an ecstasy-bubbling body". Like an eternal spring giving the poet new productivity of life Śiva abides in his devotee. This experience was not possible for the gods, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, the traditional yogic meditators, the believers in the Vedic mantras, the boasters of mystic visions, the sectarians, the ascetics, the vacillators who could believe that God is or is not, and those who try to

possess Śiva. In Hymn 20 : 6 Māṇikkavācakar states that none but his devotees see Śiva because they have been freed from bonds and are able, therefore, to perceive Śiva in themselves.

10. Another reference to Pārvatī in the form of Kālī may be a description of the goddess as having eyes like spears flashing on the battle-field (45 : 9).
11. This translation of the second sūtra has been made by John H. Piet, *Śaiva Siddhanta Philosophy* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society for India, 1952), p. 57. For his discussion of this *sūtra* see pp. 57-90.
12. *Parā-śakti* is the Lord's supreme energy having the quality of pure intelligence and the function of bestowing grace, a function shared by the other four *śaktis*. *Āṭi-śakti* or *Aruḷ-śakti* has the function of ripening souls by activating *karma* and *māyā* so that they may understand what must be done to be released from the phenomenal world. *Iccā-śakti* is Śiva's volitional energy which expresses his desire to help souls become free of the phenomenal world. *Jñāna-śakti* conveys the knowledge of action to be performed by souls which have particular and special needs. *Kriyā-śakti* is Śiva's energy which produces the evolution of the phenomenal world which includes giving to souls gross and subtle bodies and various types of experiences. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-4.
14. For a discussion of the significance of the *axis mundi* in the history of religions see M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), pp. 36-43.
15. *Op. cit.*, p. 47.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

4

SIDDHĀNTA: SIDDHA AND ŚAIVA

David C. Buck

ŚAIVA Siddhānta [Tamil: Caiva Cittantam[1]] came into being as an organized system of philosophy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D., with the appearance of the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras*. It has held a dominant position in the ranks of Tamil Śaiva orthodoxy ever since. By drawing also on the hymns of earlier Śaiva saints, the followers of Śaiva Siddhānta have developed a system satisfying to both the intellectual and the emotional needs of religious man, and with the inclusion in their canon of the *Tirumaṇṭiram* of Tirumūlar, they satisfy as well our mysterious yearnings toward the little-understood phenomena of yogic experience.

Outside orthodoxy, however, there flourishes in Tamil literature another Śaivite tradition, one which rejects many of the external aspects of the Śaiva Siddhānta, as well as certain of the fundamental tenets of the system. This is the tradition of the Siddhas [Tam.: Cittars]. One of them Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar, "The Cittar who makes Snakes Dance", sang,

> differences of creed,
> the many differences of caste—
>
> are for religionists:
>
> are they for
> true *cātus*,[2]
>
> will the minds
> of those who climb
> to the peak
> change?
>
> realize
> the Cittāntam
> of the Cittars
> and
> dance
> snake!
> dance![3]

The roots of this Tamil Siddha tradition, like those of the Śaiva Siddhānta, reach back into antiquity at least as far as the *Bhagavad Gītā*,[4] while the pre-seventh century Tirumūlar[5] of the Śaiva canon is claimed for them also. Paṭṭinaṭṭar, probably of the tenth century,[6] is also claimed by both traditions. The literature now extant from both traditions, however, is to be dated, for the most part, after the fourteenth century.

The co-existence of these two traditions has not been entirely peaceful, as intimated in the stanza just quoted; the Siddha pictures followers of any organized religion as petty quarrelers, unjust, and untrue. He even implies that, unlike the Siddhas, they have not reached the summit of wisdom ("climbed the peak"); indeed, the conclusion of the stanza may even suggest that Śaiva Siddhānta is in direct opposition to Siddha Siddhānta.

Śaiva Siddhānta's most common answer to the Siddha challenge has been either an aloof silence, or a philosophical argument which renders Siddha claims, whether they be accepted or not, a matter of limited consequence.[7] Occasionally, however, Śaiva Siddhāntin writers have erupted in scathing denunciations. In a book called *Tirunāṉmaṟai Viḷakkārāycci* two Śaiva Siddhāntins, who refer to Siddha works as "fifth station"[8] or untouchable, ask rhetorically:

> Will Caiva people, following the path taught by *Kuravars* of the Caiva Religion, who established and fostered the Caiva Creed, (ever) agree to consider (seriously) the Cittar works?

They answered their own question:

> "They will never agree...."[9]

Ramalinga Swamy of the nineteenth century, often counted in the Tamil Siddha tradition, has also come under fire from Śaiva Siddhāntins;[10] yet there are other great scholars of Śaiva Siddhānta who have not only accepted Ramalinga Swamy, but even quoted him at length in explaining the Śaiva Siddhānta position on certain points.[11] Indeed there is much in common between Siddha and Śaiva Siddhāntins. It will be the object of this essay to describe some of the relationships between the two Siddhāntas by looking at actual Siddha stanzas in the light of established doctrines of Śaiva Siddhānta. Religious perceptions of the philosophically-oriented

Śaiva Siddhāntin can be seen to differ from those of the poetically-oriented Siddha.

Inevitably, the presentation of a philosophy varies with the individual who presents it. Within the framework of Śaiva Siddhānta there have been variations, instances where one commentator stresses an aspect considered best left untouched by another. Siddha Siddhānta, however, is much less structured even than Śaiva Siddhānta, for it lacks a constant doctrinal referent, such as is supplied by Śaiva Siddhānta's fourteen *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras*. There is no "doctrine" for Siddha Siddhānta; Siddhas were not philosophers. They sang of their perceptions cryptically or openly, but never systematically. Thus the inquiry of this essay cannot be concerned with Siddha "philosophy" as such, but rather with the philosophic backdrop in front of which the Siddhas sang. There are many individual differences among Siddhas which cannot be ignored: many of the philosophic assumptions of one Siddha will not be evident or significant in the song of another. However, for the purpose of this discussion, I shall seek to summarize the basic philosophical currents behind individual works—currents which one senses upon exposure to Siddha works. On the other side of the discussion, statements representing Śaiva Siddhānta are derived from the fourteen Śāstras and writings about them.

To begin, let me invite your attention to a stanza from Iṭaikkāṭṭu-Cittar's "Conversation with the Mind":

into the empty expanse
  fly, bee!
we've burst the bonds
  of *māyā*, so
  fly, bee!

we've attained the place
  of life, so
  fly, bee!
that we've reached the State
  of the Generous One,
  fly, bee!
  fly!

Addressing the mind—or sometimes the soul[12]—as an animal or other object is a technique common in Siddha songs,[13] and it is

used in the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras* as well, by Tiruviyalūr Uyyavanta Tēvanāyaṉar in his *Tiruvuntiyār*.

Consider now the first line of this stanza. In meditation, thoughts of the world drop off, one by one, until the mind no longer functions, until our conscious nature exists as an "empty expanse". It is like clearing a forest until it becomes an open, empty plain.[14] But it is inside us. It is the true form of our intelligence, released from bondage to consideration of mundane affairs. It is *ciṟcorūpam*[15] the "true form of intelligent consciousness". There and there only can we have a *taricaṉam* [Skt. *darśanam*] or view of God.[16] God *is* there. Pāmpāṭṭi Cittar sings,

the Good Foot
which is lifted up
I've seen;

I've seen
the Light,
too;

I've seen
the Dancer
inside
the Pure Space:

the Feet
imprinted on
the attacking head
are
the True Guru's Feet,
so
dance,
snake!
dance![17]

The Siddha sees God in the empty expanse of his meditative consciousness. But what would this phrase, "empty expanse", mean for the Śaiva Siddhāntin? It would mean the same, but with a metaphysical interpretation and perspective interwoven into the meditative experience. *Tiruvuntiyār*, one of the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras* has:

Fix yourself in the Blissful Expanse
which has no night nor day.[18]

This Blissful Expanse is interpreted by Śaiva Siddhāntins to mean *aruḷ* or the "grace" of Lord Śiva,[19] and it is there that Lord Śiva himself is to be found.[20] Yoga practice, it is said, must send our intelligence into this expanse of *aruḷ*, or it is useless.[21] The *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras* also declare that, upon the experience of *aruḷ*, everything mundane will fall away from consciousness, and we will shine as the Light of Wisdom in the Bliss of presence at the Lord's Feet,[22] and that to experience *aruḷ* fully our consciousness will of necessity be utterly empty of mundane matters.[23]

It would be appropriate here to point out that the Siddha accepts the ontological reality of God and souls as much as does the Śaiva Siddhāntin in his conception of the three eternal entities: God, souls and bondage.[24] We will see shortly that it extends to the category of bondage also.

The next line of the stanza declares the bursting of the bonds of *māyā*. Neither school of Siddhānta dismisses these bonds as ultimately unreal, though both schools believe them to be rendered ultimately impotent in Release. In fact, to a Siddha, the present world is very real—all too real:

> When will I throw off my filthy body,
> When will I stop withering, wandering,
> bearing up a rice-bellows,
> and attain to Thee?[25]

Other philosophic declarations of the reality of the world are found lightly sprinkled throughout Siddha Literature.[26] Akappēy-Cittar sings,

> don't call it a lie, inner ghost!
> it's just comings and goings.
> when you call it true, inner ghost!
> you can attain Release![27]

The phrase "comings and goings" refers to our cycle of mundane births, as well as to all the other changes undergone in the world; the impermanence of each individual form does not imply the ultimate non-existence of the aggregate universe. But to the Siddha the bonds of *māyā* are not in themselves purely evil; listen to the same Akappēy-Cittar's thirty-second verse:

> the Lord's love, inner ghost!
> all of this which you see...

where the word for "love" is *pācam*, a word which also means "bondage", and is incidentally the same word used in Śaiva Siddhānta to describe the third of the three "eternal entities", that of the soul's bondage. Its double meaning shows up beautifully in this song, where the world—all of this which you see—is acknowledged as the burden it is, as bondage, yet is paradoxically referred to as the expression of God's love for souls. Our bodies may at times be almost intolerable burdens, but we are put in them for a reason; "The Wisdom of Avvaiyār", another Siddha work, has it:

> The point in getting a body is to see
> The Supreme One in all bodies.[28]

But when we reach the Pure Expanse, the force of the material universe—and of all our bondage—weakens to nothing in the face of Śivam. Listen to another Siddha:

> in the Supremely Pure Place
> where your own bondage
> spills out
> like the dew hightailing it
> when it sees the sun,
>
> see the Noble One:
> view Him.[29]

The Noble One, of course, is God. Though the Supreme is attainable only through birth in the world[30] we are put thereby in a position of real vulnerability to distractions and false orientations of priorities. Moreover, *māyā*, physical reality, is an accoutrement to the soul which cannot follow it into the presence of Śiva.

The Śaiva Siddhānta view is essentially the same; the soul is bound from unfathomable history by the dark bondage of *āṇavam*.[31] When fully effective, this bondage puts the soul into a state in which it has absolutely no activity, no intelligence, no enjoyment. The soul is then "like a diamond dropped into an ink-bottle".[32] Only on a solid, real stage can the soul engage in the activity necessary for gaining awareness of its bondage to *āṇavam*, and of the way to break that bondage. This solid stage is the physical universe and its basic stuff, *māyā*;[33] and the soul's activity is inevitably *karma*, deeds, with fruits to be enjoyed and suffered. Thus, to rid the soul

of its innate bondage to *āṇavam*, it must pass through a period of bondage to two other bonds as well, *māyā* and *karma*. Human beings are presently in that second state in which all three bonds are effective, struggling to gain some inkling of how to attain Release. There is a third state, the pure state of the soul in which, with the "onset of grace"[34] from Śivam, the soul is completely freed of all bondage of any kind, attains Release, and lives in Bliss with God.

Thus both traditions accept both the fact and the necessity of the soul's bondage to a physical reality up to the point of its Final Release. All of the Śaiva Siddhāntin's three ontological realities, then—God, souls, and bondage—are accepted by Siddhas as well.

Life in its purest state can begin only at this point. The Śaiva Siddhāntin calls it the *cuttāvattai*, the Pure Phase, or *aruḷ-nilai*, the State of Grace.[35] "The soul is really an intelligence",[36] contends the Śaiva Siddhāntin, hence, the Pure Phase—the Phase in which *āṇavam*, which obscures intelligence, is entirely destroyed—is the state of fulfilment for the soul. The eternal soul, by entering the State of Grace, has become pure and "eternally real".[37] It "exists as indestructible".[38] The Śaiva Siddhāntin's State of Grace can thus be called, as Iṭaikkāṭṭu-Cittar sings of it in his third line, "the place of life", where "bondage to the comings and goings" of phenomena is no longer effective, where the soul exists in eternal life. The "place of life" is, like the "empty expanse", another attempt, from another angle, to describe the indescribable stage of Release.

Eternal life is much more to a Siddha, though, than a metaphysical reality, more even than a personal goal. It is a great banner under which many Siddhas are united. Many people who study Siddha literature agree with V.V. Ramana Sastri who writes:

> The great work, therefore, that lies before man, the Siddha would aver, is so to purify his body and sanctify his life, and to integrate the two into an eternal monad, that body and life become one and identical, that is to say, absolutely proof against any liability to their mutual sunderance known as death.[39]

Most Siddhas share in a tradition of seeking immortality:[40]

> If you realize the Eternally Established Being
> Your body will be established without decay.[41]

But that the body referred to here really is the physical body is not certain. On the contrary, evidence that it is not may be found within the same decad of verses from which this citation is selected:

> If you see the Meritorious One who is
> between the eyebrows,
> Your body will be established
> without form.[42]

Similar allusions are made in another whole decad on "Transcending Form", in the same work,[43] and in other references as well.

Ultimately, to the Siddha, the body is a reality around which many of his songs center. But as we might expect, it is a poetic reality. That is, the physical body which we cannot escape in ordinary life, which is seen as the locus for our present existence, is used in song as a metaphor for the locus of our existence in Final Release. In contrast to the body which circumscribes most of our ordinary life, Siddhas sing of an "indestructible body" attained in Release. Metaphysical dilemmas are natural accoutrements of this poetic use of imagery, but the Siddha is not concerned. Into what ontological category the body—subtle, physical, or any other—can be placed is not a matter of his concern. He stresses only the experience of spiritual progress and sings of such experience in metaphors of immortality and miracles. Nor are his metaphors univalent. Though he sometimes sings with a specific inner meaning, his thrust is not for clarity within the framework of human categories, but the transcendence of wordy precision. Again, his is a poet's not a philosopher's religion.

The significance of poetic multivalence in Siddha literature speaks to the question of its significance in philosophic literature as well. To step outside the Śaiva Siddhānta for a moment, we may note the various interpretations to which a philosophic work such as the *Vedānta Sūtra* has been liable. As far as the present essay is concerned, however, there is a clear difference between the poetic multivalence of Siddha songs and the philosophic precision of Śaiva Siddhānta texts, and this difference is pointed up very clearly in terms of the treatment of the body.

Śaiva Siddhānta is clear on this question, for the physical body has its place in the metaphysical framework of the *tattva*-s derived from the primal stuff of *māyā*, and there is no way ever to transmute it into an eternal entity. Yet the eternality of the soul is also clearly

maintained, and statements of immortality within Śaiva Siddhānta are often logically related to that concept, or with the experience of meditation,[44] sometimes with the imposition of *aruḷ* (grace) as a sort of metaphorical body for the released soul.[45] The songs of canonized saints have many beautiful stanzas singing of immortality,[46] yet they can all be worked into the ontological framework of the Śaiva Siddhānta, in accord with the basic assertion that reason will support the true experiences of the saints.[47]

Śaiva Siddhānta is clear, then, on the metaphysical implications of its stand—as is necessary in a philosophic system which explains the universe and beyond—while Siddha sings poetically of the transcendence of the metaphysician's categories. The soul is to the Siddha a reality to be nurtured properly and not to be bound to the limitations of man's verbal understanding:

> speaking won't work, inner ghost!
> even if you speak, it's a fault;
> no, no, no, no, inner ghost!
> didn't you gain solitude?[48]

One more point can be made about this line, relative to the Siddha's use of the verb "attain" in "we've attained the place of life". Siddha Siddhānta stresses the individual effort necessary for the attainment of Release, and accepts the role of *aruḷ* secondarily,[49] while the emphasis is just reversed in Śaiva Siddhānta. To the Śaiva Siddhāntin individual effort is necessary, but Final Release depends entirely upon God's bestowal of *aruḷ*, an event the soul can never completely control; we must prepare ourselves by our own efforts, but it is God's act which bestows grace, not our act.[50] As will be seen shortly, the attainment of Salvation is a sort of personal triumph for the Siddha, but a negation of personal importance for the Śaiva Siddhāntin.

Iṭaikkāṭṭu-Cittar ends this stanza with the line:

> that we've reached the State
> of the Generous One,
> fly, bee!
> fly!

He speaks of God as the Generous One, he who helps out the souls in their quests for fulfilment, who gives what is needed. Śaiva Siddhānta has worked out the metaphysical implications in this

sort of image in its grand conception of the purpose of God's acts. Each one of God's acts is performed specifically for the benefit of souls.[51] Creation is seen as a sort of "fuller's earth" used to clean the soul of its beginningless association with the intelligence-obscuring power of *āṇavam*, to clean the ink off the dirty diamond and cause the soul to shine in its ultimate state of Blissful Fulfilment in the presence of Śiva. It may be of interest to note that reference to God as the Generous One in both Siddhāntas draws on an ancient tradition, which speaks of the munificence of seven legendary Tamil kings of the Caṅkam era who gave of their wealth to any who asked, and who are remembered to this day for it.

Looking at one stanza out of thousands in the corpus of Siddha literature, we have seen certain elements of both Siddha and Śaiva Siddhāntas. Considering those elements as they appear in specific statements of the stanza, we have been able to see something of the relationships that occur between Siddha literature and Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy. Consider briefly three more aspects now before we summarize.

First, though not all Siddhas go so far out on a limb, most are associated in the minds of the public with the sorts of claims made by Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar when he sings,

we'll create
something new
like
what Brahmā
created;

we'll make
Brahmā,
  even,
sit below
  us:
we'll even
live
as equals
of the Lord.

these are our
deeds,
  so
dance,
  snake!
dance![52]

This stanza must be interpreted, I believe, in terms of the realization, one-by-one, of the *tattva*-s or "realities" that can occur in yogic meditation; this realization is the "new creation" when the yogin exists on the level of Ultimate Reality with Śiva—that is "equal to" Śiva. Such an attainment, naturally, puts Brahmā, who is not Paramaśivam, but only the agent of creation for Paramaśivam, below the Siddha as well. Such an understanding makes the metaphysics of this stanza digestible, if not exactly palatable, to the Śaiva Siddhāntin; but the language is still unthinkably wrong for him. Listen to Appar's song, often quoted as epitomizing a mind-set praised in Śaiva Siddhānta[53]

> His duty it is to sustain me.
> My duty it is simply to serve.

Granted that neither of these quotations represents the total metaphysical picture of either Siddhānta, the difference in tone is striking and representative enough to add to our understanding of the relationship between them: the Siddha's triumphal attainment, and the Śaiva Siddhāntin's more quiet one. Not all Siddha works contain such brash declarations of the mightiness of Siddhas, it must be noted, and Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar, like other Siddhas, himself accepts the ultimate subservience of the soul to God.[54]

Secondly, Siddhas are famous for their renunciation of outward forms of worship. Perhaps the most famous stanzas in this regard are by Civavākkiyar:

> You ignorant worshippers at
> temples and tanks:
> Where are temples?
> Where are holy tanks?
> The temple is inside your heart;
> and so is the tank;
> There is no creation, no destruction,
> no, never, never, never![55]

There are attacks, more and less caustic than this one, in many Siddha songs, but the message is always the same: don't look for God outside yourself; you'll never find him there if you can't find him inside, and once you find him inside yourself, there is nothing to attract you on the outside.

Śaiva Siddhānta, on the other hand, does not reject ritual worship; rather, it affirms it as a means to help the worshipper center his mind on God rather than on things of the world.[56] Moreover, the two most fundamental of the fourteen *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras* even admonish those who have tasted Release to "worship the vestments of devotees, and the temples themselves, as God",[57] a statement which can be explained in several ways, but whose essential injunction to ritual worship stands.[58] Śaiva Siddhānta demands both an internal and an external orientation;[59] although ritual worship is not a *sine qua non* of the philosophy of the system, it does have a place in the completed tapestry of Śaiva Siddhānta.

Note that it is particularly ritualized worship which Siddhas reject, and not simply the whole of the external world; understanding the world is part and parcel of the way to Release:

inside the heart
    you have to realize;
the inside and outside
    you have to know.[60]

So here again the difference between the two Siddhāntas is one of expression, with different emphases of a common thrust. The difference in emphasis is seen here in the Śaiva Siddhāntin's intellectual accommodation of ritual worship, as opposed to the Siddha's emotionally forceful rejection of it, while both enunciate the necessity of understanding the outside world as a whole.

Finally, Siddhas are also known sometimes to write abstrusely, and it would be remiss not to include an example of this aspect in this presentation:

in a long letter, we took our place;
in an inseparable letter, we twisted the tail;
in a letter omitted, we spread the hood;
in the path of the sky, we joined and danced;
and the letter that appeared we will also
have twined—
in the twelfth letter, we joined again;
with confidence we reached
the Glorious Feet
of our Gracious Guru,
            so
dance,
            snake!
dance![61]

Much of what we know of Siddha Siddhānta comes from the deciphering of stanzas such as this one. Two interpretations have been made of this stanza. One, by an eminent Śaiva Siddhāntin, relates each letter to one of the letters in the revered Śaiva *mantra*, *śivāyanamah*;[62] the other, by an eminent follower of the Siddha path, relates them to breath control and expenditure in *vāci-yōkam*.[63] Here again we see the characteristic difference between the metaphysical perspective of the Śaiva Siddhāntin and the experiential—in this case, yogic—perspective of the Siddha.

We have looked at several stanzas from Siddha literature, and have discussed certain Śaiva Siddhānta concepts. The three ontological realities of the Śaiva Siddhāntin—God, souls, and the bondage separating God from the souls—are, in essence at least, accepted in most Siddha songs. *Aruḷ*, or the grace of Śiva, is sung of, though its ramifications are likely to be somewhat different in the two Siddhāntas. The status of the soul in relation to God, while arrogating somewhat more prestige in Siddha Siddhānta, is, nonetheless, one of subservience in both traditions. The Siddha's feeling for the soul's relation to the physical body, and that feeling's difference from Śaiva Siddhānta ideas are also interesting, particularly in the ambiguities of the questions of immortality-imagery and of poetic language with respect to philosophic language. The processes of attainment of release are different, yet not entirely opposed, and the conception of the role of God from the point of view of the individual soul is very similar. Whatever the relations may be on the myriads of comparable points, however, a significant, general difference in thrust and concern can be felt in the opposition of the Śaiva Siddhāntin's clear metaphysics, and the Siddha's song, in which he deliberately bypasses intellectual clarity and precision, opting rather for emotional forcefulness.

Notes

1. Since this essay deals largely with Tamil sources, the Tamil transliteration will be used most commonly. The transliteration system is that of the Tamil Lexicon except (a) where a Sanskrit source is the referent, or (b) where the word is commonly known in English in its Sanskrit form, and not in its Tamil form. In this case it is transliterated from the Sanskrit, as, for example, in the terms "Śaiva Siddhānta" and "Siddha".
2. Sanskrit, *Sādhus*.

3. "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 99. All translations from the Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar are taken from David C. Buck, *Dance, Snake! Dance! The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar* (Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1976), pp. 113-14. All other translations from Tamil are also my own.
4. *Cf. Bhagavad-Gītā* 11 : 22.
5. T.P. Meenakshisundaram, *A History of Tamil Literature*, (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1965), pp. 65-68.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 134-6.
7. *Cf.* N. Civakuranāta Piḷḷai, *Civañāṉa Cittiyār Ārāycci* (Madras: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1955), p. 100n, for example.
8. V. Citāmpara Rāmaliṅkam Piḷḷai and M. Cāmpaciva Piḷḷai, *Tiruñāṉmaṟai Vilakk-Ārāycci*, p. 32, quoted in K. Kailasapathy, *Oppiyal Illakkiyam* (Madras: Pāri Nilayam, 1969), pp. 189-190.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Cf.*, e.g., Ārumuka Nāvalar's "Pōli Aruṭpa Maṟuppu" *in* T. Kailāca Piḷḷai, *Srī-La-Srī Ārumuka Nāvalar Perumāṉin Piraṇantat-Tiraṭṭu* (Madras: Arumuga Navalar Vittiyanupalana Accakam, 1954) pp: 89-121.
11. *Cf.*, e. g., V.A. Devasenapathy, *Of Human Bondage and Divine Grace* (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1963), pp. 27-28, 99-101; see also, Kāñci-Toṇṭaimaṇṭalātīna-Kuru-Māksannitānam Cīlat-Tiru-Ñāṉappirakāca-Tēcika-Paramācāriya-Cuvāmikaḷ's "Introduction" to V. Balaramaiah, *Cittar Meypporuḷ* (Madras: Aruṭperuñcōti Patippakam, 1972), pp. iii-v; there are also other examples of Śaiva Siddhāntins' accepting Siddha literature.
12. "The Song of Iṭaikkāṭṭu-Cittar", stanza 81.
13. Iṭaikkāṭṭu-Cittar addresses not only a bee in this way, but also a flute, a peacock, a cuckoo, a cow, even a milkman and a group of other people, as well as singing directly to his mind and intellect. Separate sections of his Song follow these patterns. Other Cittars address a "Bejewelled Lady", an "Inner Ghost", a snake, etc. etc., Some Cittars do not use this device at all.
14. *Cf.* "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 79.
15. *Ibid.*, stanza 71. (Skt. *cit-svarupa*).
16. See D. Buck, "The Snake in the Song of a Sittar", in G. Yocum and H. Buck, eds., *Structuralism in South India Studies*, pp. 15-16 for more description of this Empty Expanse, and the vision of God there.
17. "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 82.
18. *Tiruvuntiyār*, 19.
19. *Ibid.*, with commentary by P. Ramanatha Pillai.
20. *Ibid.*, stanza 36, with commentary by P. Ramanatha Pillai.
21. *Ibid.*, stanza 21, with commentary by P. Ramanatha Pillai.
22. *Tiruvaruṭpayaṉ* 49, with commentary by P. Ramanatha Pillai.
23. See D. Buck, "The Snake in the Song of a Cittar", pp. 177-180, on the Siddha's view of the ontological reality of the soul. His acceptance of the ontological reality of a Supreme Lord is obvious from many stanzas of praise, for example, "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 82, quoted above.
24. *Ibid.*, stanza 60, with commentary by P. Ramanatha Pillai.
25. Pattirikiriyār, "The Lament of True Wisdom", stanza 46.
26. See also, for example, "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 102.
27. "The Song of Akappēy-Cittar", stanza 89.

28. "The Wisdom of Avvaiyār", 2 : 1 (*Uṭambiṉ Payaṉ* 1).
29. "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 90.
30. *Cf.* also *Tirumaṇṭiram*, 724.
31. V.A. Devasenapathy, *Śaiva Siddhānta* (Madras: The University of Madras, 1966), pp. 218-19.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
33. Note that the *māyā* of the Śaiva Siddhāntin is significantly different from that of Saṁkara, for whom *māyā* is ultimately unreal. *Māyā* is a concrete ontological reality to the Śaiva Siddhāntin.
34. Devasenapathy, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, p. 233.
35. *Cf.* K. Lakshmanan, *Indian Philosophy* (Madras: Paḷaniappa Brothers, 1970), p. 388.
36. Devasenapathy, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, p. 217.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
39. "The Doctrinal Culture and Tradition of the Siddhas", in *The Cultura Heritage of India* (Calcutta: Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee, 1937), vol. II, p. 308.
40. See D. Buck, "The Snake in the Song of a Cittar", pp. 179-181 for more on a Cittar and the immortality of the body.
41. "The Wisdom of Avvaiyār", 24 : 9 (*Cūniya Kālamaṟital* 9).
42. *Ibid.*, 24 : 3 (*Cūniya Kālamaṟital* 3).
43. *Ibid.*, 16 : 1-10 (*Urupātītam* 1-10).
44. Appar, "Potu: Tanit-Tirunēricai" 4 in K. Subramania Pillai, ed., *Tirunavukkaracar Tevāram* (Srivaikuntam : Kumārakuruparaṉ Caṅkam, 1970), p. 547 n.
45. *Tiruvaruṭpayaṉ* 88, with commentary by P. Ramanatha Pillai.
46. S.M. Ponniah, *Selections from Panniri-Thiru-Mutai* (Kuala Lumpur: S. Lazar & Sons, 1968), pp. 10, 13, 18, 38, 39 et al.
47. John H. Piet, *A Logical Presentation of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1952).
48. "The Song of Akappēy-Cittar", stanza 73.
49. *Cf.* "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 119.
50. *Cf.* S. Satchidanandam Pillai, "Śaiva Siddhānta", in ... *Collected Lectures on Śaiva Siddhānta*, 1946-1954 (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1965), Lecture 6, p. 62.
51. *Cf.* Devasenapathy, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, p. 205 and Civakurunāta Piḷḷai, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
    Those acts that seem contradictory to that purpose, such as universal destruction, obscuration of the soul's true knowledge, etc., are all seen as devices whereby God essentially teaches the soul and coaxes it along the path toward its Final Release from all bondages.
52. "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 32.
53. E.g., by G. Subramania Pillai in "The Doctrine of the Divine Guru", in ... *Collected Lectures on Saiva Siddhānta*, 1946-1954, Lecture 1, p. 51.
54. See D. Buck, "The Snake in the Song of a Cittar", pp. 173ff.
55. "The Song of Civavakkiyar", stanza 35.
56. *Cf.*, e.g., Civakurunāta Piḷḷai, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.
57. *Civañāṉapōtam*, cūttiram XII; see also, Civañāṉa Cittiyar, cūttiram XII (as

in, e.g., Civakurunāta Piḷḷai, *op. cit.*, p. 111).

58. *Cf.*, e. g., Kanthimathinatha Pillai, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-73; Ramanatha Pillai, ed. *Civañāṉapōtamum Ciṟṟuraiyum* (Madras: The Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1968), pp. 160-69; and Civakurunāta Piḷḷai, *op. cit.*, pp. 115ff, et al.
59. Devasenapathy, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, pp. 270-71.
60. "The Song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar", stanza 115.
61. *Ibid.*, stanza 124.
62. The late Siddhanta Panditar P. Ramanatha Pillai, personal interviews and correspondence, January 1972.
63. Professor M.A. Dorai Rangaswamy, personal interview, 23 May 1972. *Vāci-yōkam* is a type of yoga based on breath control.

PART II

THE RITUAL EXPERIENCE IN ŚAIVISM

INTRODUCTION

THE second set of essays focuses on the ritual life of Śaivism. It is clear that ritual is far more than "outer trappings" in the Śaiva experience. Ritual is rather a paradigm of the religious experience itself. It is the means of transformation from one mode of being to another—the technique for bringing about "new creation", for moving from social conventions to transcending "madness", from one perspective on the world to another, from bondage by *karma* to liberating love. But at the same time, ritual affords identity, confirms who one is in the context both of social groupings and of history. The symbolism of ritual is both affirmative and transformative; in the ritual life of Śaivism we often find most profoundly what it is to be Śaivite.

Jean Filliozat has spent most of a lifetime studying the ritual life of Śaivism and particularly its textual sources, the Śaivāgamas. In his present essay he sketches a brief introduction to the role of the Śaivāgamas not only in the ritual life of Śaivism, but also in the wider religious practice of India and Southeast Asia. He notes that the Āgamas incorporate many ideas from earlier sources, such as Vedic and Yogic elements, and that they reflect Śaiva philosophy. All such sources are integrated, in the Śaivāgamas, into manuals for ritual procedures that have remained important, if not definitive, both for certain architectural styles found in Indonesia, Cambodia, and Thailand and also for the conduct of festivals and temple rituals throughout Śaivism today. In that sense the Śaivāgamas both inform the Śaiva religious experience and embody it.

J. William Curtis brings the perspective of an architect to bear on a discussion of the symbolism of ritual space. Curtis suggests the concept of "ideational space" to convey the fundamental two-fold nature of space symbolism in Śaivism. Śaivism speaks of "manifest" space and "unmanifest" space roughly homologous to the relationship between phenomenal and numinous realms. In ideational space, three things at least are expressed: (a) one adjusts to space rather than *vice versa*, (b) it is sometimes characterized by multi-centeredness and, (c) symbolism uses the manifest to represent the unmanifest.

It is this last relationship which Curtis explores in particular. The use of the manifest to symbolise the unmanifest is a fundamental motif in Śaiva architecture and ritual. It is basic to the Śaiva view of the essence of the religious experience. There is movement from the manifest (the soul or *paçu*) to the unmanifest (non-differentiation from Śiva [*pati*]). The same movement is reflected in temple symbolism in the South. For example the *gopura* (manifest) leads to the *garbhagṛha* or inner sanctuary (unmanifest). In this motif, South Indian Śaiva architecture combines the pragmatic considerations of socio-political, economic currents with the ideological tradition. The movement from manifest to unmanifest is also expressed in ritual wherein the body or ritual room (manifest) is transformed into Śiva (unmanifest).

J. Bruce Long discusses the significance in the worship of Śiva of the important Vedic hymn, *Śatarudrīya-Stotra*. While a number of Vedic deities are of multiple denomination—some are simple and multiple, personal and impersonal, transcendent and immanent at the same time—none is more radically ambivalent than Rudra. Nowhere is Rudra's multivalence expressed more fully than in the *Śatarudrīya-Stotra*. This hymn, apparently recorded by the tenth century B.C. as a chapter of the *Vāyasaneyī-Samhitā*, serves as a basic intonation in Śaiva ritual even to the present day.

Both in the way the hymn is used to accompany sacrificial oblations to Rudra and in its own sonority, the *Śatarudrīya-Stotra* bears a great deal of symbolic meaning in the ritual life of Śaivism. In the first place, J.B. Long argues, the hymn may be a prototype for the ritual form known as *nāmajapa*, the recitation of names of deity recorded for the first time in the *Mahābhārata*. Then again, there is frequent use of theological "puns", the use of words with a terrestrial connotation that also share the nature of a divine or astral entity. In fact, in the *Śatarudrīya-Stotra*, syllables, quarter-lines, lines, and couplets are often made homologous to parts of the cosmos and to deities which preside over appropriate parts of the cosmic and social order. The sound itself is one with the deity.

The mantras of the hymn, together with accompanying oblations, satiate Rudra who is now homologized to Agni, god of fire. Agni-Rudra is propitiated in the ritual and equated to Prajāpati, the altar, the *gāyatrī-mantra*, the Sāman hymns, the three levels of the universe, the two cosmic luminaries, and immortality.

While earlier commentators on the hymn have noted the

terrifying aspects of Śiva-Rudra therein, Long insists the character of Rudra-Śiva is both terrifying and blissful, positive as well as negative. Further, Long argues, the sense of "fear" invoked by the hymn is profoundly basic to the religious experience. Referring to Reinhold Niebuhr's discussions of "fear" in the ritual experience, Long notes that the *Śatarudrīya-Stotra* evokes that "fear" which is the sense of living in a state of finitude and mortality. Rudra causes that suffering implicit in the religious experience wherein one senses that he is both "being diminished" and "being enlarged".

Long adds to his discussion of the hymn a new translation of it.

The last essay in this series is Fred Clothey's discussion of a *Yāga* or fire sacrifice as it is practiced in a South Indian temple today. Carefully preserved by *mukhāṇiar brāhmaṇa* priests in the Śrī Subrahmaṇya Temple in Tiruccenṭur, Tamil Nadu, the ritual is observed twice on each of the six days of the Skanda-Ṣaṣṭi festival in the month of *Aippáci* (October-November). The ritual, as now practiced, combines several textual traditions, most particularly parts of the Karaṇāgama and Kamikāgama; these are texts written sometime after the eleventh century A.D., in such a way as to combine Tantric and Vedic symbolism. Yet the ritual as practised today serves a purpose that speaks to the contemporary moment. The ritual sequence symbolically brings Subrahmaṇya into existence as from the fire sacrifice and invokes his healing powers to dispel physical and cosmic malaise.

The ritual occurs in a specially consecrated sacrifice-room (*yākacalai*) which symbolically becomes a cosmos and is homologized to a cosmicized man as in the *vāstu-puruṣa maṇḍala*: the sequence of events includes the sacralizing of the room and of the bodies of the priests as well as the fire sacrifice itself in which 101 oblations are offered to the fire.

The symbolism of the ritual sequence has meaning at several levels. It is aesthetically pleasing and serves a psycho-social function in permitting the sacrificer(s), of whatever caste, to find identity in the orthodox tradition. The fullness of divinity is brought to bear at a particular point in time and space and his healing power made available. A sacred world is symbolically created and homologizations acted out between the body, the room, the cosmos, and the appropriate deities. The ritual events become a paradigm for the ultimate religious experience in Śaivism—the attainment of immortality and unity with the divine.

Together, these essays suggest something of the way in which ritual serves as a "forest of symbols", dramatizing the meaning of being "religious". They express the Śaiva understanding of time and space, of man, world, and god. Above all, they are a microcosm of the ultimate possibility Śaivas believe is experienced by those whose lives are oriented by their god.

5

THE ROLE OF THE ŚAIVĀGAMAS IN THE ŚAIVA RITUAL SYSTEM

Jean Filliozat (Paris/Pondicherry)

THE standard ritual in Hindu temples is bàsed on books of religious technical teachings which are called Tantras or Āgamas. They are in use in Viṣṇu temples as well as in Śiva temples.

Vaiṣṇava Tantras usually bear the title of *saṃhitā*, as in *Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā*, *Paramasaṃhitā* etc.... But we do find such titles as Lakṣmī Tantra as well. Śaiva Tantras are ordinarily termed Āgama, as in *Kamikāgama* and other texts.

These texts, as well as the corresponding ones in Jain and Buddhist circles, are normally divided into four parts or *pāda*-s: 1) *jñāna*—or *vidyāpāda*, dealing with doctrine, 2) *kriyāpāda*, devoted to the description of rites and to the rules for building temples and making images, 3) *caryāpāda*, giving directions for the conduct of life and for individual observances, and 4) *yogapāda*, completing the *caryāpāda* by psychosomatic training leading to the supreme goal.

As Āgama simply means "Tradition", the name has been applied in India to any tradition; it has even been borrowed in Indonesia to designate religions, for example, "Āgama Hindu, Āgama Islam, or Āgama Kristen".

Today, the Śaivāgamas are chiefly in use in South India. It is in South India that the religious tradition has been preserved at its best, as South India has been less disturbed by various kinds of invaders than has Northern India. Further, South India, after the decline of Vedic and Brahmanical religions has been a region of intense creativity in philosophy and devotion. Śaṅkara, for example, was born in Kerala, Rāmānuja in Tamil Nadu, Madhva in Karṇaṭaka, while Nimbārka and Vallabha were natives of Andhra.

The first great movement of poetic bhakti, both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava, appeared in Tamil Nadu with the Śaiva saints called Nayaṇmār and the Vaiṣṇava saints, the Āḻvār. But the Śaivāgamas have also been in vogue in Kashmir where flourished the Śaiva school of Trika different from but analogous to the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta school which was also based on the Āgamas.

Moreover, the Śaivāgamas have been exported from India to South-East Asia. Not only are the main features of Hindu rituals practised in Cambodia and Indonesia based upon the Śaivāgamas, but also these texts are explicitly referred to in Sanskrit inscriptions of Cambodia. The Parameśvara, for example, is mentioned in one inscription of Bantay-srei in 976 A.D.[1]

Some theories have been advanced regarding the origin of mountain-temples in Cambodia and of the so-called *devarāja*. One such theory supposes that the human king was divinized and represented by a linga established with his name. Such theories are no longer tenable when we consider the Āgamas. Mountain-temples either symbolising Mt. Meru or being built on tombs are erected according to the Āgamic prescriptions. *Devarāja* is not merely a god-king, but is Śiva himself as king of the gods, Brahman, Viṣṇu and Indra. He is naturally represented by a linga which may be designated with the name of the king who established it.[2]

In modern times, in the Buddhist courts of Cambodia and Thailand, the so-called "Brahmins" who have been in charge of State ceremonies are not spiritual descendants of the Hindu priests of the Khmer empire period. They mainly came from the Coromandel coast and belonged to the Kailāsaparaṃpāra, a Śaiva group still flourishing in Tamil Nadu.[3] Their texts in Sanskrit—texts they no longer understand—are inspired by the Śaivāgamic rituals and also quote the Vedas very often. Their Tamil texts are hymns, both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava.[4] These "Brahmins" represent a second Āgamic wave of Hindu influence on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. The previous one had been the more important, beginning in the first centuries of the Christian or Śaka era. By that time Vedic ritual had already been virtually abandoned, despite the fact the Vedic texts were still sacred and still inspired religious and cosmological doctrines. Āgamic practices, such as *agnikārya*, *arcana* and *pūjā*, were more popular than Vedic *yajña* and great Vedic ceremonies like *agniṣṭoma*, *aśvamedha* and others. The Epics, *Purāṇas*, *Dharmaśāstras*, *Arthaśāstra*, *Vyākaraṇa* and scientific books of medicine and astronomy were imported from India side by side with Buddhist scriptures. But these texts did not give rules for religious practice. These have been supplied by the technical manuals—The Tantras or Āgamas.

The Western notion of Tantrism separates the corresponding practices from "orthodox" Hinduism (represented by Smṛtis, Epics,

Purāṇas and Darśanas) and evokes images of magical and sexual practices as characteristic of the Tantras. That is the consequence of paying exclusive attention to such practices as prescribed in some peculiar Buddhist Tantras and parallel Hindu sectarian texts. But the ordinary Śaivāgamas or Tantras are simply the detailed manuals of general Śaivism, just as *Pāñcarātrasaṃhitās* are those of general Vaiṣṇavism.

The classical list of Śaivāgamas is as follows:

1. Kamikāgama
2. Yogajāgama
3. Cintya—
4. Karaṇa—
5. Ajita—
6. Dīpta—
7. Sūkṣma—
8. Sahasra—
9. Aṃśumat—
10. Suprabheda—
11. Vijaya—
12. Niśvāsa—
13. Svayambhuva—
14. Anala—
15. Vīra—
16. Raurava—
17. Makuṭa—
18. Vimala—
19. Candrajñāna—
20. Bimba—
21. Prodgita—
22. Lalita—
23. Siddha—
24. Santana—
25. Sarvokta—
26. Parameśvara
27. Kiraṇa—
28. Vatula—

Several of these texts seem to be lost. Many are restricted to one or two *pādas* instead of four. The priests of the temples ordinarily keep the *kriyāpādas*, which are specially useful for them to perform the rites.

There are also a number of *upāgamas* and secondary technical manuals or *paddhatis*, in Sanskrit, also often translated into Tamil. The most important authors of these manuals have been Īśānaśivaguru,

Aghoraśivācārya and Somaśambhu. The *Somaśambhu-paddhati* belongs to the XI century. This text is being translated into French because it is a standard text of Āgamic ritual.[5]

But the ritual and the technical practices of yoga are not separable from the doctrine, because the full practice of Śaiva religion includes the knowledge of Śiva as Supreme Being producing the world from himself, under the influence of his Śakti who has generally three aspects: Jñānaśakti (by whom he gets the notion of the world). Icchāśakti (by whom he wishes to enjoy this world), and Kriyāśakti (by whom the world is created). As far as man is concerned the doctrine refers to him as a *paśu* (a cow). Śiva is the *pati* who takes care of the *paśu* afflicted by the *pāśa*, the bondage which is constituted by the world and the human condition in this world.

This doctrine is fundamental to the Sanskrit Āgamas and also to the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta. The Śaiva Siddhānta is referred to by name in one inscription of Kailāsanatha's temple at Kāñcipuram, perhaps as early as the seventh century.

This doctrine attained great popularity in Tamil Nadu thanks to Meykaṇṭatevar ("the tevar—a name of a caste—who has seen the Truth"), author of the *Civaññāṉapōtam*, and thanks to such of his followers as Civaññānacittiyar. The *Civaññāṉapōtam* is considered to be a commentary on twelve stanzas from the *Rauravāgama*. But these stanzas have not been traced in the text presently at our disposal.[6]

Before Meykaṇṭatevar *Śaiva Siddhānta* principles had been described in a large collection of stanzas known as the *Tirumaṇṭiram* by Tirumūlar. The poetic value of the work is great, but veiled allusions and double meanings make it sometimes obscure. The author is considered to be a *Cittar* (Skt. *siddha*) in possession of marvellous powers (*aṣṭamahāsiddhi*). According to his legend, he met cows which were in danger because their cowherd had died. In order to save the cows, he entered the cowherd's corpse. That is an image which recalls the compassion of Śiva as Pati taking care of the *paśu-s*. Tirumūlar claims to have been instructed by Nandi, who is Śiva himself in the guise of an anthropomorphic god with a bull's head (Nandikeśvara).

The *Tirumaṇṭiram* deals extensively with the practice of yoga, sometimes in an original way. For example, *tāraṇai* (Skt. *dhāraṇā*) is understood not simply as a fixation of the attention but also as the stopping of breath (kumbhaka) together with the awakening of the

consciousness of Śiva's unity. The symbolism of ritual yogic practices like the awakening of Kuṇḍalinīśakti is also revealed. The text serves as a guide by means of psychosomatic exercises towards the Supreme goal.

These exercises, ordinarily known as Haṭhayoga are more ancient than it has been generally supposed. There is in the *Lalitavistara* (composed around the start of our era) a description of one practice tried by the Bodhisattva which corresponds to causing the ascension of the Kuṇḍalinīśakti towards the skull. When the exercises are performed in order to reach the *aṣṭamahāsiddhi*, they are characteristic of the *siddha*-s—the "Perfects". The name *Śaiva Siddhānta* has a double meaning: "Demonstration of Śiva's truth" and final term for the "Śaivite Perfect ones".

In any case, the teachings of the Āgamas in their *caryā* and *yogapādas*, like similar teachings in various manuals,[7] are essential for individual ritual and for their prescriptions of the *kriyāpādas* for the public cult.

This public cult consists first in the daily service of the God in the temple. He is treated like a king in his palace. He is awakened and receives everything for bathing, eating, enjoying music and dance, etc.

During the festivals, (*mahotsavas*) he is carried outside in procession. The ritual also includes oblations in fire (*homa*) and sprinkling of water (*snāpana, kumbhābhiṣeka* et al.)... Symbolism plays a great role in the ritual. For example, in the different kinds of *snāpana* (bathing), the vessels in use represent Śiva, Śakti, and around them, the gods of the universe as conceived in the Āgamic cosmology. They also receive samples of precious things and medicinal plants. They are established in fixed places, as are the Buddhist deities in the famous Tantric mandalas.

All the rites must be accompanied by recitation of formulae (*mantra, astra, kavaca* et al. ...), enunciation of condensed symbolic syllables (*bīja*) and also by gestures (*mudrās*).

Vedic *ṛc* and *yajus* are also prescribed in some Āgamas (*Ajitāgama* for example), but they must be excluded according to others.

The ritual may be performed or conducted only by persons having received an appropriate *dikṣā*. These do not always belong to the Brahmanical class, though they are commonly termed "Brahmins". The *dikṣā* for certain Āgamas, is more important than birth. Nevertheless, those who order the ritual, the *ācārya* or

deśika, must be Brahmins. The ordinary officiants in Tamil, the *gurukkaḷ*, are not recognised as regular Brahmins. That is in accordance with the general situation in India. Regular Brahmins are characterized more by knowledge and technical science than by sacerdotal functions. In fact, the majority of Brahmins are not priests and the majority of priests are not Brahmins. Even the Vedic *brāhmaṇa* did not perform any ritual operation; rather, he surveyed the ceremony, intervening with his science only in case of faults.

But the Śaiva doctrine of the Āgamas, emphasizing, as they do, knowledge and ritual observances more than lineage, has helped to open the highest religious practice to non-Brahmins.

The Śaiva cult together with the Śakti cult has been the most widespread throughout India and even in all the countries which have received a strong Hindu influence. This cult is based on the *Āgamas*. So the role of these Śaivāgamas has been and still is fundamental in the Śaiva ritual system.

Notes

1. G. Coedès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, I, Hanoi, 1937, pp. 150-154.
2. J. Filliozat, 'New researches on the relations between India and Cambodia', INDICA, 3. 2. Sept. 1966, pp. 95-106. And *Laghuprabandhaḥ*, pp. 454-465.
3. *Kailāsaparaṃparā*. Felicitation volumes of South East Asian Studies presented to H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, Vol. II, Bangkok, 1965, pp. 241-247 and *Laghuprabandhaḥ*, pp. 394-400.
4. Neelakanta Sarma—*Textes sanskrits et tamouls de Thailande*. Publ. Institut français d' Indologie, n° 47. Pondicherry, 1972.
5. *Cf.* Helène Brunner, *Somaśambhupaddhati*, Publications Institut français d' Indologie n° 25, 2 vol., Pondicherry, 1963-1968.
6. N.R. Bhatt, *Rauravāgama*, ed., 2 vol., publications of the Institut français d' Indologie, n° 18, Pondicherry, 1961-1972.
7. One has been recently published: Tara Michael, *Śivayogaratna*. Publ. Institut français d' Indologie, n° 53, Pondicherry, 1975.

6

SPACE CONCEPTS AND WORSHIP ENVIRONMENT IN ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

J.W.V. Curtis

THE Hindu concept of full space functions as an implicit but powerful and pervasive determinant in environmental decisions. Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy and worship-environment exhibit this influence in a correspondence of remarkable beauty and precision.

Hindu traditions, including Śaiva Siddhānta, define themselves in part through philosophical writings and codified sets of rules governing specifics which give explicit contextual interpretation to philosophical concepts. A significant portion of these rules pertain to environmental decisions. Behind the specific prescriptions and proscriptions which comprise these rules we can sense an impressive edifice of correspondence which governs environmental decisions implicitly. The Hindu concept of space constitutes the keystone of these relationships.

Hinduism sets forth the concept of the fullness of space in early myths of creation and maintains the theme consistently throughout the development of its traditions.[1] Vāk, the active principle of Prajāpati, who is alone at the moment of creation, manifests Herself as Śabda which forms and supports the cosmos.[2] Śabda inheres everywhere, immanently and transcendentally. The concept contains no allowance for vacuity in any real sense.[3] The positive quality of space permits no negation.

The Śaivāgamas—substrata of Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy and core of its practice—also categorically disallow the concept of any vacuity in space. According to the Āgamas *ākāśa* is full, without interruption, and *śabda* is its essential nature.[4]

Traditional Hindu thought perceives and conceives its environment in terms of an idea I shall here call "ideational space". Ideational space contains both manifest and unmanifest space. The term "manifest space" in this usage denotes any solid object, substance, liquid, or gas such as air, which the senses can perceive. "Unmanifest space" refers to all that lies between, surrounds, pervades and underlies manifest space.

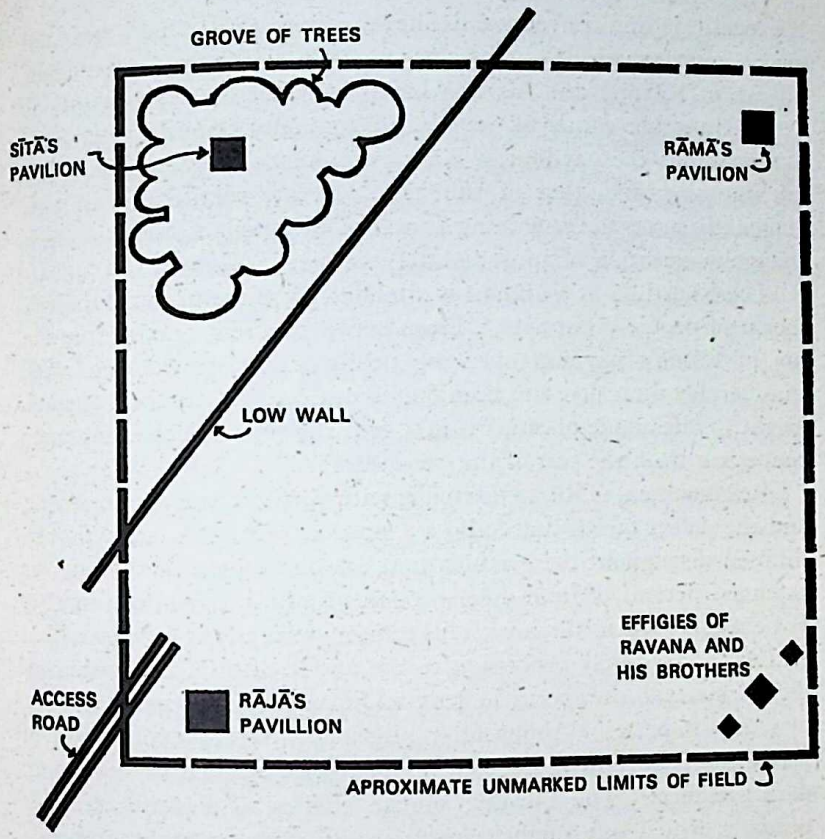
The concept of ideational space contributes to distinctive characteristics of Indian environments in at least three areas: limits of control, concepts of centeredness, and the uses of symbolism.

In the first place the notion of full space exerts a profound influence on the relationship between individual and environment by determining to a great extent the geographical limits within which a person feels free to intercede overtly in environmental processes or to exercise control of his or her environment. Within the Hindu tradition a person tends to live with the environment as he finds it. One tries to cope with the environment by arranging oneself rather than it. The minimal use of furniture in a Hindu household demonstrates this attitude in environmental decisions. One sits on the floor plane adapting body position to environment rather than modifying the environment by the imposition of chairs or other equipment. Further, modifications of the environment such as building a house should carefully correspond to the appropriate cosmological model and should involve propitiation of the deities involved. This approach derives naturally from the concept of full space which cannot be carelessly violated without inviting retribution.

One apparent result of this notion is a certain reluctance to reshape or tinker with the social and geographic milieux. It is more commonly the case that the Hindu maintains a scrupulous personal cleanliness in terms that are religiously and ritualistically prescribed. In a very real sense, one can observe that for the Hindu the skin represents the geographic limit of the environment over which one may feel privileged to exercise any effective control; further, this attitude constitutes a logical outcome of the concept of full space.

Secondly, the experience of ideational space is often characterized by multi-centeredness and simultaneity. Thus the spatial-temporal arrangement of traditional Hindu events may provide accommodation not so much for viewing a center as for simply being present near a center. The traditionally oriented Hindu attends an event, not that he even indirectly become *the* center of activity, but that he have *darśana* or "viewing" of a center. While direct sight has high value—and *darśana* derives from the Sanskrit *drś* (to see)—*darśana* has acquired the extended meaning of the experience of the simple presence of a person, power, or event. It does not require that the event focus upon the person experiencing *darśana*.

The celebration of Rām Līlā at Vārāṇasī vividly illustrates the phenomenon of multi-centered space and simultaneity.



ILLUST. 1

The festival of Rām Līlā annually celebrates defeat of the demon King Rāvaṇa by Rāma. A virtually flat expansive field by the outlying village of Rāmnagar provides a site of suitable size. The physical arrangement consists of four distinct foci defining corners of the somewhat rectangular grounds. A slightly elevated pavilion for

the local rāja and his retinue defines a corner of the field near the main entry road. Counter-clockwise from the rāja's pavilion, effigies of Rāvaṇa and his two brothers stand on a small hillock defining another corner of the site. Diagonally opposite the rāja's shelter stands the pavilion of Rāma, ornately decorated but much less imposing than that of the rāja. A low retaining wall cuts diagonally across the remaining corner of the site, accommodating a change in elevation of approximately six feet. (Illustration 1).

The Rām Līlā at Vārāṇasī is attended by three to four hundred thousand people of all ages. From across the field one can see the top of Rāma's pavilion over the heads of the crowd only with considerable difficulty, and then only if one has greater than average height. The abode of Sītā sits in a grove of trees which completely conceals it from the rest of the grounds.

Re-enactment of Rāma's struggle with Rāvaṇa, the rescue of Sītā, and the defeat of Rāvaṇa follows a pace so leisurely and action so diffused throughout the grounds that one may sense no activity for extended periods of time unless action occurs immediately nearby. For example, when Rāma with his retinue descends from his pavilion and moves in stately procession to the abode of Sītā, the flatness of the site conceals the spectacle from all but a relatively small number by whom it passes. Apparently, pilgrims have no expectation of seeing all of the festival, nor is there even great desire to achieve more than presence. The burning of the effigies of Rāvaṇa and his brothers, which one might assume would climax the festival in a glorious visual display of fireworks concealed in the flammable images, seemed of nominal concern. Large numbers of people departed long before the spectacular finale.[5]

Thirdly, the concept of ideational space requires a symbolism, as one can only represent unmanifest space by use of the manifest. Here the concept of ideational space comes to its richest and most significant fulfilment in the development of the South Indian Śaiva temple.

The *gopuram* and *prākāra*, or gateway and enclosing walls, of South Indian temples set forth an architectural motif unique to its time and place, unlike temple development in any other part of India and not prescribed by any known texts preceding its appearance.[6]

It appears that in the development of the South Indian temple motif architects of the Cōḷa Maṇḍalam have two distinctive models from which to choose. The first model, set forth in the tradition's venerated Sanskrit texts, advanced the *vimāṉa*, or tower over cult

image, as the primary architectural element. The second model came from the village gateway motifs illustrated in the bas reliefs of Barhut and Mathura.[7] This model, radical in its superimposition of a larger motif upon the traditional *vimāṉa* pattern, led to the development of successive *prākāra*-s and *gopuram*-s.

The use of the gateway model developed very clearly from a constellation of historical developments and an interwoven set of pressures. Southern *bhakti* movements, stressing the god's personality and the emotionalism of devotion to a marked degree, developed feelings of sanctity toward certain specific temples. This led to a profound sense of place, and to an identity of certain shrines, which, though South Indians have repeatedly demolished and rebuilt shrines, tended to make permanent the existing form of these particular shrines.

The economic function of South Indian temples favored the development of singular large institutions, a pressure in direct conflict with the maintenance of early shrines without modification. The temple performed banking functions. It often also performed functions now considered governmental: if lavishly endowed, it might collect numerous taxes, own entire villages outright and might well participate in potentially large undertakings such as irrigation canals.

The use of the temple as an instrument of communication between ruler and ruled in the somewhat isolated nuclear areas comprising the Cōḷa Maṇḍalam made it desirable for the ruler to lavish endowments especially on precisely those shrines lauded in *bhakti* poetry and which had acquired tremendous sanctity. At the same time, this sanctity would have mitigated against any disturbance; against demolition and reconstruction of these temples particularly, while in general no such feelings of prohibition applied at all. The only viable model of expansion was that of the gateway which led immediately to the development of the *prākāra* and *gopuram* motif.[8]

During the Cōḷa period, South Indian architects operated within a context based formally upon traditional texts but influenced strongly by conflicting economic, political, social and religious pressures. The situation was unique and the South Indian architect abruptly broke radically with the theme of *vimāṉa* development prevailing throughout all of India. One must recognize the South Indian temple as a highly innovative and creative endeavor dependent upon a unique sensitivity to contextual pressures and an unusual ability to synthesize their resolution in an appropriate architectural conception

which gave expression to deeply motivating facets of tradition.

One cannot know what Cōḷa architects thought, or precisely what they saw clearly as their motives, since they have left no explicit, exhaustive discussions of the matter. Nonetheless, one can draw a picture of pressures that promoted change. And, further, one can construct pictures of elements in the culture which must have endowed the new concept with a sense of rightness, and which does so even now. One of these consists of the correspondences between the philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta and its temple form, of which the concept of space is an essential element. Both explicit philosophy and its exposition in daily ritual reveal these correspondences with great clarity.

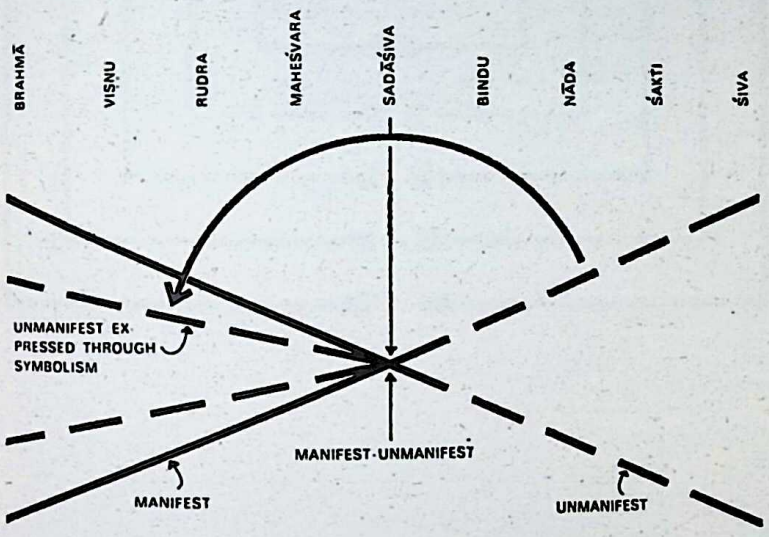
Ritual has as its final purpose the attainment of a state of non-difference from Śiva. One may correctly say also that Hinduism holds *mokṣa* as the final end of action, and this holds true for Śaiva Siddhānta as well. Realization of non-difference from Śiva precisely describes the Śaiva Siddhāntin concept of the attainment of a released soul, of one who has been granted the gift of Divine Grace, one who has thus attained *mokṣa*.

Functionally, ritual contains an exact pragmatic parallel. The worshipper, in the initial procedures, conceptually destroys his physical body and re-constructs in its place a body composed of the presence of Śiva. One can see in this process a clear progression from a physical, manifest plane to a subtle, unmanifest plane. In fact, the ritual in its entirety represents an orderly progression from manifest to unmanifest with an environment manifest—physically experienced—and unmanifest symbolically represented, in space, object, concept and act. The spatial organization of temple and gateways, the development and placement of images, the hierarchical conceptual ordering of the manifestations of Śiva, and action, all weave together in ritual to form one cohesive whole.

Śaiva Siddhānta has several descriptions of manifestations of Śiva, five-fold, seven-fold, nine-fold, and thirteen-fold. The nine-fold schema has perhaps the widest currency and contains the essential elements of the others in full development. The nine-fold description contains, in descending order, Śiva, Śakti, Nāda and Bindu as unmanifest, Sadāśiva as manifest-unmanifest, and Maheśvara, Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahmā as manifest unfoldings of the Absolute.

Bindu, literally meaning a spot, a drop, and a point, has obvious geometric connotations. The Unmanifest has equally powerful

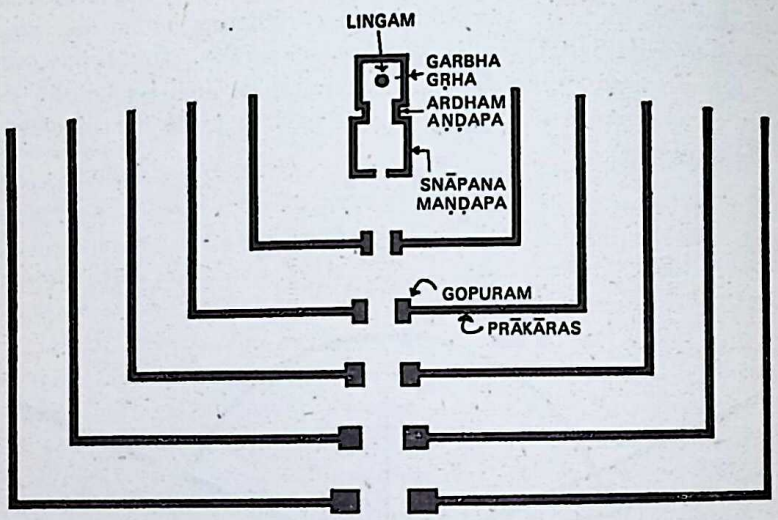
connotations as all-inclusive, and so also the broad expanse of the manifold world of names and forms denoted by the development of the Manifest. The scheme indicates a geometry of two triangles, one manifest and the other unmanifest, radiating out in opposing directions from Sadāśiva, the manifest-unmanifest. In this physical world, one must visualize the unmanifest through symbolism, so that the unmanifest triangle folds back against the manifest. (Illustration 2).



ILLUST. 2

The South Indian motifs of temple development and *gopuram* entry appear to clearly exhibit this same geometry. Radiating out from the cult image, the chambers and porches increase in size.[9] The *gopuram*-s pick up this motif and also increase according to successive order. (Illustration 3). The unmanifest, symbolized by the openings through the *gopuram*-s and by the space of the porches and chambers, physically penetrates the manifest embodied in temple and

ŚAIVA SIDDHANTA PRĀKĀRA



ONLY FACING GOPURAMS
AND PRAKARAS ILLUSTRATED

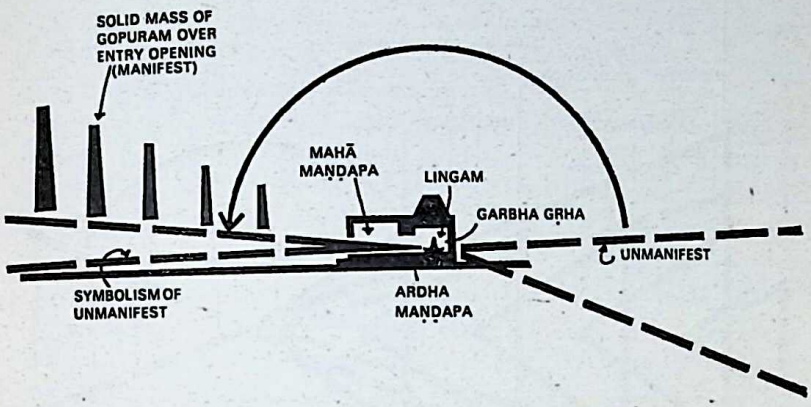
ILLUST. 3

SCHEMATIC PLAN OF A MINIMAL SAIVA SIDDHANTA TEMPLE WITH COMPLETE PRAKARA DEVELOPMENT

gateways,[10] centering upon the cult image. The solid masses of the *gopuram*-s likewise focus toward this point. The conceptual geometry bears close resemblance to the schema of the Siddhāntin nine-fold development of Śiva. (Illustration 4).

The objects of worship, in arrangement and formal development, also echo a theme of manifest-unmanifest, physical-subtle, in both

form and placement. The two principal figures in Śaiva Siddhānta ritual, Śiva and Sūrya,[11] contrast sharply. Sūrya, who stands along the east wall of the *Snāpana maṇḍapa* facing the Lingam, is represented



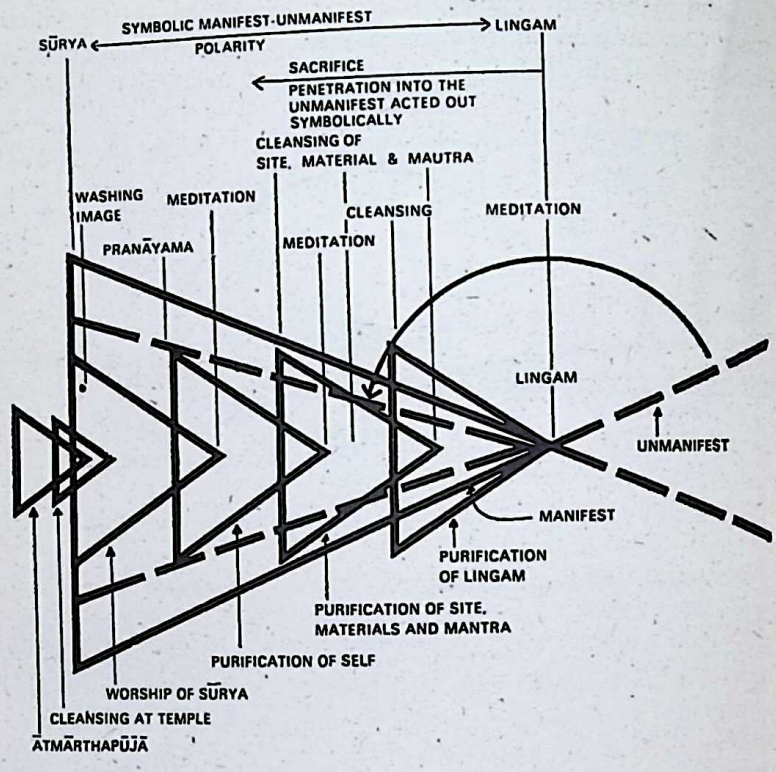
ILLUST. 4

DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION THROUGH
PORTION OF SOUTH INDIAN TEMPLE

as quite realistically human. He has about his image every semblance of a human-like representation. He stands in fully developed manifest form in the world. Sadāśiva, by contrast, has in his Lingam symbol as little form development as possible. In the Sūrya-Lingam polarity, Sūrya embodies the manifest and the Lingam announces the unmanifest.

Finally, the theme receives its full statement in the ritual act which lends final meaning to the ritual environment. Again, the theme of manifest-unmanifest, physical-subtle, is stated repeatedly. (Illustration 5).

Ātmārthapūjā, worship for his own self, constitutes the first morning ritual act of the *gurukkal*, the temple priest. During this *pūjā* he marks his body with the three-line sectarian marks of Śaivism on five, eight, sixteen or thirty-two places on his body as has been



ILLUST. 5.

prescibed by his *guru* using *Bhasma*, sacred ash. This constitutes the first step, a very physical, outward act of identification with Śiva which will become increasingly subtle throughout the temple rites. The three lines represent Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, the three most accessible manifest emanations of Śiva, and, by them, His three great acts in the world: creation (Brahmā), maintenance (Viṣṇu), and destruction (Rudra).[12]

Upon arriving at the temple the *gurukkal* will renew the markings if necessary. He will also wash his feet to cleanse himself physically and sip water to cleanse himself inwardly or spiritually, an abbreviated expression of the manifest-unmanifest motif. He then

worships Śūrya. Here again one should note the relationship of Sūrya to Lingam as one, relatively, of manifest to unmanifest. The priest opens the formal ritual with a worship of manifest form which announces the pattern of the entire ritual to follow.[13]

The *gurukkal* then performs the five-fold purifications: purification of self, the site of worship, the materials of worship, the *mantra*-s that are used, and, finally, the Lingam.

Purification of the self now states the manifest-to-unmanifest progression completely. The *gurukkal* commences with performance of *prāṇāyāma*. This very physical act carries the same symbolic meaning as the three lines of *bhasma*. *Recaka*, exhaling the breath, symbolizes Brahmā and creation; *pūraka*, inhaling the breath, symbolizes Viṣṇu and preservation; *kumbhaka*, retaining the breath, symbolizes Rudra and destruction. In addition, a more subtle element now appears for *recaka* destroys the merit and demerit of action, literally the field of action denoted as *māyā*, *pūraka* breaks the bonds of *karma*, and *kumbhaka* releases one from the rule of ego.

Then the *gurukkal* conceptually destroys the physical body composed of *Pṛthivi*, earth; *Kumbha*, water; *Vāhni*, fire; *Vāyu*, air; and *Ākāśa*, space. He cools the ashes of the body, now consumed by cosmic fire, with *amṛta*, and then conceptually reconstructs the body as Śiva. At the termination of this procedure he meditates completely interiorly upon twelve conceived manifestations of Śiva ending with contemplation of Śiva Nāṭarāja dancing in the Sahasrāra.

Purification of site, of materials and of *mantra*-s would seem a single restatement of the theme in total. Each purification contains within it a progression. Yet, it would appear that the arrangement of site, material and *mantra* in sequence has significant meaning. The site of worship spreads to the limits of the cosmos in the ritual and it represents all the multiplicity and physical reality of the cosmos. The materials of worship, while universal in their own right, have a more focused meaning and a more abstract quality. *Mantra*-s, also universal, have even a more narrowly focused meaning and approach closer to the unmanifest just as the Lingam stands as a door to the unmanifest. The arrangement states a three-step progression from manifest to unmanifest along an abbreviated scale.

Next, the *gurukkal* rises from his seat in the *Snāpana maṇḍapa* and, with some minor rites of obeisance, enters the *Garbha Gṛha* to execute purification of the Lingam. After cleaning the chamber and the Lingam of remains of the previous sacrifice, he repeats conceptual

destruction of the physical body, reconstruction of the body as Śiva and ends with meditation of Śiva in the heart.

Here the worship is brought to a subtle point. The *gurukkal* has completed the manifest-unmanifest progression to the focus of Sadāśiva, the door to the unmanifest. From this point all progression can only find symbolic expression in the world. Thus the ritual turns back and proceeds to develop more and more physically as the symbolism flowers, culminating finally in acts of offering which to all intents and purposes appear entirely physical. The *gurukkal* gives the furthest reaches of unmanifest activity symbolic expression in the world through the most violently physical acts of the entire rite.

As the ritual turns from subtle point, the *gurukkal* conceptually plans the three qualities of existence, *sattva*, *tamas* and *rajas*, across the field of worship. As in the instances of *bhasma* and *prāṇāyāma*, the three qualities of existence equate with Śiva through the agency of his three great acts, *sattva* with creation, *rajas* with maintenance, and *tamas* with destruction.[14]

The *gurukkal* then prepares the pedestal of the Lingam, and himself, and invokes the presence of Śiva into the Lingam. He invites the God, establishes him by prayer that guarantees his presence throughout the sacrifice, welcomes Him and offers water. He then conceptually equips the God-Lingam with the attributes of Śiva, His major and minor anatomical parts, dress and ornaments. He bathes and anoints the Lingam with oil. Drawing a curtain across the entrance to the *Garbha Gṛha* he wraps the pedestal with a fresh cloth skirting and adorns the God-Lingam with garlands. Then the *gurukkal* pulls the curtain to the side, presenting Śiva to his devotees and His devotees to Śiva.

Lastly, he equips the God with His retinue of manifestations, limbs, gods, goddesses and weapons before proceeding to the acts of sacrifice. He accomplishes this by reciting the appropriate *mantra* in each instance and throwing a flower in the appropriate direction around the Lingam.

Finally, the very physical acts of worship commence. The *gurukkal* offers fifteen items: water for washing the feet, water for sipping, water offered to a guest, a mirror reflection, incense, light, an umbrella, several varieties of food, and drink. The *gurukkal* places the foods and drink on the face of the Lingam and washes each one off, one by one.

Then the *gurukkal* recalls the subtle essence of the physical sacrifice

by conceiving Śiva's consort standing to one side of the God-Lingam by mentally raising Her hand, placing food in it and conceiving Her as turning and giving the food offering to Śiva. Camphor, flowers and water on a tray also containing *bhasma* are displayed to the God, the Lingam is sprinkled with water and the *gurukkal* signals the termination of the rite by abruptly turning from the image and leaving the *Garbha Gṛha*, where he distributes *bhasma* to devotees in the *Mahāmaṇḍapa*. Thus ends obligatory temple ritual as prescribed in *Karaṇāgama*.

The act of worship thus gives visible form to the correspondences of environment, image and philosophy that express themselves in one dimension as a clear development of ideational space.

Notes

1. One should note, as an aside, that Hindu philosophy characteristically considers space and time as inseparable categories. (Kumar Kishore Nandal, *A Comparative Study of the Concepts of Space and Time in Indian Thought*, Varanasi, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1968, p. 45).
2. In the beginning Prajāpati alone existed and with him was Vāk as His second. Vāk in this usage is Śakti, the principle of Power. In the beginning Śakti manifests Herself as Vāk (word), in turn exhibiting Śabda (sound). However, just as we cannot correctly take Vāk to mean "a word", neither does Śabda denote sound as heard by the ear. Śabda manifests as Spanda, or causal stress. (John Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters*, Madras, Ganesh and Company, 1968, pp. 7, 41). Thus Śabda motivates all universes.
3. "...there is no vacuum in the universe. It (vibrated and unvibrated sound or causal stress) is a beginningless and endless continuum and an indivisible unfragmented plenum.... It pervades the universe. Not an inch or a fraction of this universe is without it. Being all-pervasive, it contains, sustains and coheres every object in the universe. It is the container without the content, which is itself an element and not a vacuum. It invades, pervades and inheres. It is both unexpellably immanent and spontaneously transcendent." (P.S. Mukherji, foreward to Swami Pratyagatatmananda Saraswati, *Japasutram*, Madras, Ganesh and Company, 1971, p. 6).
4. Sundranath Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Volume V, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 37).
5. Observations made by the author during a visit to the festival in 1971.
6. J.C. Harle, *Temple Gateways of South India*, Oxford, Oxford Press, 1963.
7. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1925.
8. The author has not intended to deal exhaustively with the historical development of the South Indian temple motif, as the subject does not bear directly upon the theme under discussion. The discussion here serves the purpose of noting very briefly the historical context which resulted in the motif, and

particularly to note the very radical, innovative character of this unusual direction in Hindu temple design.

9. The *Garbha Gṛha* seems to form an exception to the concept. However, at this point the symbolic geometry has transferred from space to the Lingam. The larger space of the *Garbha Gṛha* is also necessary to physically conduct the rites of worship.
10. I am indebted to Dr. Vidya Nivas Misra, Sanskrit University, Vārāṇasī, for this perceptive insight.
11. *Karaṇāgama* states categorically that worship must commence with worship of Sūrya, without which the following rites will come to nothing. In addition, Sūrya in reality is Śivasūrya, none other than Śiva Himself, a fact which underscores the polarity of Sūrya and Lingam.
12. Śaiva Siddhāntins posit Śiva as performing five great acts in the world: creation, maintenance, destruction, the bringing of souls into the world to work out their *karma*, and the granting of Divine Grace. Curiously, they do not involve the last two of these five in the ritual. Perhaps this indicates acknowledgement of the larger Hindu tradition which generally recognizes only the first three acts.
13. The description of ritual set forth here does not include every discrete act, but only a general summary as necessary to indicate its form. The author has elected to omit some items which appear superimposed upon the central theme. Most of these have only minor significance. An exception is worship of Gaṇeśa and Skanda Kārttikeya, whose inclusion or deletion seems to have no real effect on the flow of the ritual but merely attenuates explication of the principal theme. Worship of these deities also follows the physical to subtle progression pattern.
14. Alain Danielou, *Hindu Polytheism*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1964, pp. 22, 23.

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7

RUDRA AS AN EMBODIMENT OF DIVINE AMBIVALENCE IN THE *ŚATARUDRĪYA STOTRAM*

J. Bruce Long

It was common practice for Vedic priests to invoke deities in the pantheon by presenting oblations of food and drink while singing hymns of praise (*sāmana*-s, *mantra*-s, *stotra*-s, *sūkta*-s). The hymns were composed either as intricate poetic verses (*sūkta*-s) or as simple strings of sacred formulae (*stotra*-s). The recitations served as an oral counterpart to the sacramental acts of constructing the altar, kindling the fire and presenting the oblations in the fire. In Vedic religion, the offering of sacrifice and the recitations were two complementary aspects of a single ritual performance.

It is the purpose of this paper to explore ways in which the sacred hymn and sacrificial ritual known as the *Śatarudrīya* reflect the image of Divinity during the Vedic period and how this notion of Divinity is consistent with the religious experience of "god-consciousness" of its devotees. We will do this, first, by analyzing the text of the hymn as well as its accompanying ritual, and, secondly, by interpreting these materials critically with the help of Richard R. Niebuhr's discussion of religious experience.

Rudra as Divine Ambivalence

Around the turn of the century, the British Indologist, A.A. Macdonell, attempting to characterize the basic features of the Vedic gods, observed that "Personification has, however, nowhere in Vedic mythology attained to the individualized anthropomorphism characteristic of the Hellenic gods. The Vedic deities have but very few distinguishing features, while many attributes and powers are shared by all alike." He believes the reason many deities share numerous traits in common has to do with the fact that "the departments of nature which they represent have often much in common, while their anthropomorphism is comparatively undeveloped".[1] However, if Sri Aurobindo's contention is true, that, contrary to the

opinion of nineteenth century Indologists, few of the Vedic deities represent, 'departments of nature" in a simple and unequivocal sense,[2] then, we must seek another explanation for the undeveloped nature of anthropomorphism in the Vedas. One possible explanation is that Vedic priests understood Divinity to be manifested within the world in multivalent terms: both simple and multiple, both personal and impersonal or transpersonal. In many instances, a single deity is presented in various guises and the domain of his power is extended either by elevating him to a lofty and transcendent position (as with Varuṇa) or by multiplying the departments of nature and society over which he exercises control (as with Rudra). In this way, both the unified and differentiated, the personal and impersonal dimensions of divinity were reflected in a realistic and vivid fashion. Further, the Vedic poets extended the realms over which a particular deity exercised jurisdiction by multiplying the number of names, epithets, character traits, heroic deeds and divine powers which were believed to belong properly to that god, until, in the end, they declared his sovereignty to be universal in scope.

While the Vedic poets applied this principle of *multiple denomination* to all the deities in the pantheon to some degree, they developed it in a most elaborate fashion in the case of Rudra.[3] As many Indologists have remarked previously, an impressive number and diversity of names and epithets are assigned to Rudra throughout every phase of Indian religion. He is the multiform deity par excellence. As one scholar has put it, "His very character lent itself admirably to splitting up into partial manifestations as well as to assimilation of divine or demonic powers of cognate nature, were they Āryan or non-Āryan".[4] The priests invoked him with as many pleasing names and attributes as his nature and the particular occasion would allow, in hopes that, by doing so, they might avert the outbursts of wrath for which he is so renowned and earn his benevolent favor.

With the possible exception of Varuṇa, Rudra[5] is the only god in the entire company of Vedic deities who is conceived to be a radically ambivalent deity. He is wrathful, terrifying and unpredictable, yet a god who also possesses the capacity to act benevolently toward mankind and other creatures in granting remedies for diseases and providing other boons basic to human welfare.[6] From Vedic times to the present, Rudra's character has been distinguished by a multifarious nature reflected in an impressive variety of epithets,

powers and deeds; these attributes are aften expressed in bipolar terms, becoming manifest in patterns of dynamic ambiguity.[7]

Even in the *Ṛg-veda* (I. 114; II. 33; VI. 46), Rudra is represented by a far greater number of physical features and character traits than one might expect of a deity who was supposed to occupy a subordinate position among the gods at that time.[8] The practice of representing Rudra as a divinity with a multifarious personality had become an established convention by the time of the *Atharva-veda*[9] where every part of his body is venerated *ad seriatum*: his face, eyes, skin, form, appearance, belly, tongue, teeth and even the odor emanating from his body. Further, his multiformity is represented by parts of the cosmic, animal and human realms over which he exercises divine sovereignty: the five creatures (*pañcapaśu*: cows, horses, men, sheep and goats); the four cardinal directions; heaven, earth, and atmosphere; all creatures that are living (*ātman*) and breathing (*anu*) upon the earth; and, finally, the beasts of the forest, wild animals of the woods, birds, cattle and marine monsters. As if compelled to provide complete certification of Rudra's "omniform" and "omnipresent" nature, the poet addresses him as the "All-formed one" (*viśvarūpa*), and as that divine power which, "at a single glance [can] scan the entire earth; from the eastern you strike the northern ocean."

The practice of depicting Rudra's character as a manifold composite of divine traits and of identifying each aspect of his nature with a particular segment of the universe, served as the model for the composition of the *Śatarudrīya-stotra* and, perhaps, for the composition of numerous other hymns at later stages of the Indian tradition. It is because the *Śatarudrīya* expresses divine multivalence so well and because we believe the hymn and the ritual to have influenced the development of liturgies later, that they deserve a more extensive scholarly investigation than they have received.

Form and Function of the Śatarudrīya Litany in the Vedic Tradition

One of the most effective modes of sacred eulogy developed by the Vedic poets is the hymn (*stotra*), composed of a lengthy series of declarations of "homage" or "obeisance" to a god's many names, traits, abodes, attendants and famous deeds.[10] The most ancient, persistent and revered example of this genre of hymn in the Indian

religious tradition, is the *Śatarudrīya-stotra* ("The Hymn of Praise to the Hundred Rudras" or "...Rudra in his Hundred Aspects").[11] (*See* pp. 123 for a new English translation of the hymn by this author.)

The *Śatarudrīya-stotra*[12] is a litany in praise of Rudra, the multifarious deity represented in Vedic literature as the divine embodiment of the powers of nature and society in both their terrible and benevolent phases. The hymn is recited in accompaniment to the 425 oblations presented to the one hundred Rudras (or to Rudra in his one hundred aspects), at the conclusion of the ritual construction of the fire-altar (*agnicayana*). The hymn is composed of a series of magico-religious formulae (sixty-six *mantra*-s or *śloka*-s of variable lengths) which, taken as a whole, presents a vivid and varied picture of the popular conception of Rudra at that time.

The *Śatarudrīya-stotra*[13] constitutes a complete chapter (*kāṇḍa* 16) of the *Vājasaneyi-saṃhitā* and is considered traditionally to form an independent Upaniṣad. Although only a small number of the formulae from this hymn are quoted or cited in the *Brāhmaṇa*-s, the hymn was undoubtedly one of the most popular and widely-used liturgical hymns in ancient *Brāhmanical* tradition. Even today it is considered by Śaivas throughout the subcontinent of India to be the most sacred and efficacious of hymns. Śaiva priests chant the litany in its entirety twenty-seven times during the twenty-four hour celebration of the Great Night of Śiva (*Mahāśivarātri*), from Kedarnath in India's far north to Cape Comorin in the south.[14]

The sanctity of the *Śatarudrīya* hymn for Śiva's devotees is greatly augmented by the fact that the five-syllabled invocation to Śiva (i.e., *pañcākṣara-mantra* or simply *pañcākṣari*), *namaḥ śivāya*—makes its first appearance in this sacred text. Like the *Puruṣa Sūkta* (RV X. 90), the *Śatarudrīya Stotram* (or simply the *Rudram*, as it is popularly known) is chanted in the course of both domestic and public rituals, and on all other occasions when Rudra is given a ritual ablution (*abhiṣekam*).[15]

The primary characteristic of the hymn is its portrayal of the "pantheistic" form of Śiva[16] as the highly volatile embodiment of Divinity within every form of life in nature and society. The recitation of this hymn is considered by Śaivas to be one of the most efficacious modes of meditation (*sādhana*) upon God in his many manifestations.[17]

The oblations which are accompanied by the recitation of this litany are familiar to the *Brāhmaṇas*.[18] Even some of the minor Upaniṣads (i.e., the *Jābāla* and the *Atharvaśiras*) extol the spiritual

virtues of the *Śatarudrīya Stotram*.[19] The profound veneration with which the devotees of Śiva regard this litany is illustrated further by the claim of the 7th century South Indian Śaiva singer-saint, Appar, that, "just as the Vedas and their six *aṅgas* (branches) were the precious jewel to the (ancient) Brāhmaṇas, so was *namaḥ śivāya* to himself (Appar) and his followers".[20]

The *Śatarudrīya Stotram* as a Paradigm of *Nāmajapa*

In the *Mahābhārata*, there appeared for the first time a mode of religious worship consisting of the recitation of the divine names (*nāmajapa*) of God.[21] *Nāmajapa* could be performed either within the context of a sacred rite or as an independent propitiatory act. This type of hymnody is most fully exemplified in the "Hymn of a Thousand Names" (*sahasra-nāma-stotram*) addressed to Śiva, to Viṣṇu and to the goddess Durgā, in the *Mahābhārata*.[22] In the *Mahābhārata*, as in the Vedas, the Divine names are recited primarily in order to persuade the deity being addressed to provide the devotee with some desired boon—e.g., numerous progeny, victory in battle, safety from misfortune, the promotion of prosperity and health, the acquisition of religious merit and the entrance into close personal communion with the deity himself. In addition, each of the epithets in the hymn served as a *mnemonic* device to aid the worshipper in recalling the virtues, powers, exploits and offices of the deity for purposes of meditation and worship. In post-Vedic times, with the emergence of popular sectarian religion, these strings of names were recited *ad seriatum*, while counting the beads on a rosary (*japamālā*, *akṣamālā*).

While the first *bona fide* example of this genre of hymn makes its appearance in epic literature, there are numerous selections in the Vedas where *ṛṣi*-s and sacrificial priests (*purohita*-s) invoke various deities by reciting hymns composed of strings of epithets which delineate the many attributes of the particular deity being addressed. Given the relatively close structural parallel between the *Śatarudrīya* and the *Sahasra-nāma-stotra*, there is a firm basis for arguing that the former composition may have served, either directly or indirectly, as a model for the composition of the latter. Although we cannot be sure that the composers of these epic hymns consciously utilized the Vedic hymn as a model, they must have been acquainted with the Vedic example (given the fact that the *Śatarudrīya* appears as a

sub-*parvan* in the *Mahābhārata*) and may have employed the earlier hymn as a working model.

The religious ideology behind the composition and recitation of the *Śatarudrīya* might be described as the "mystique of the Sacred Utterance". The Vedic priests believed that the hymns and ritual formulae were oral embodiments of cosmic forces. Not only couplets (*śloka*-s), lines (*mantra*-s) and quarter-lines (*pada*-s), but words and even individual syllables (*akṣara*-s) are homologized with particular parts of the cosmos and with various deities who are believed to be in control of the many departments of the natural and social orders. On this basis, the recitation of the formulae on the appropriate occasion serves to coax the divinities so addressed to intervene in the world process on behalf of the sacrificer and his kinsmen. Along with this belief in the efficacy of the Sacred Word is the conviction that the Divine Names serve not merely as figurative or symbolic representations of the god so-named, but as concrete and highly efficacious embodiments of the spiritual essence of the deity himself. In brief, sacred words of invocation and the divine power(s) designated by the terms, are thought to be one and the same within the context of the sacrifice.[23]

In the course of the *Śatarudrīya* rite, the primary concern of the *yajamāna* was focused at the point where each recitation should occur and upon the proper order of the various chants. The Vedic priests seem to have been less concerned with the religious or theological meanings of the formulae, prayers and hymns, than with the actual words recited and the ritual actions performed in the manner prescribed by the ritual manuals. This meticulous concern for the correct placing of each item in the ritual and for the careful adherence to every injunction in the ritual texts grew out of a conviction that arranging words and deeds in right correlation would produce the desired results automatically.[24] The gods were believed to be willing and able to grant the boons provided the eulogies were correctly formulated and the oblations sufficiently generous. The more elaborate the panegyrics and the more generous the offerings, the greater the likelihood that the desired objectives would be realized.

Furthermore, the text pertaining to the *Śatarudrīya-homam* (ŚB IX. 1.1) contains numerous examples of one of the more prominent developments in liturgical and literary form during the period of the *Brāhmaṇas*: namely, the formulation of arcane or mystical connections between an entity (e.g., a religious functionary, human virtue,

efficacious deed, animal or some other object) and one or more entities within the divine sphere (e.g., a specific deity, planetary body, or divine power) believed to share either a common nature or similar properties and powers. These mystical links were established by means of what might be described as a "theological pun".[25] The priests or liturgical composers sought to augment the pleasure of the gods in the sacrificial offering by fashioning increasingly fanciful and ingenious examples of such puns. It was their belief that the gods would reward the devotees in proportion to the quantity and quality of such eulogies and the degree of ingenuity displayed by these linguistic associations. The priests certified the religious validity of such practices by declaring that "the gods adore the esoteric". It should be noted, of course, that the procedures employed in identifying two objects, the names of which are composed of similar phonemes, in most instances, transgress all the rules of grammar and linguistic analysis. But, in such cases, adherence to the laws of proper linguistic derivation gave place to the need to articulate certain *deep* theological meanings that could be expressed in no other way.

Analysis of Rudra's Character in the *Śatarudrīya Stotram*

The Rudra of the *Śatarudrīya* is essentially the same deity who appears under that name in the *Ṛg-veda*, except that in the former text his personality has been impressively augmented and he appears under essentially different images. He is still the same ambivalent and unpredictable god—an archer deity whose arrows inflict both men and animals with disease, misfortune and death but, at the same time, a god in whom there is a great capacity for benevolence. He lives in faraway places, in the clouds or on the mountains and hills, on lofty perches from which he shoots his arrows of ambivalent qualities, but, by and large, at a significant distance from civilized places. Like any ordinary woodsman, he wanders about (primarily at night) through woods and fields, along paths or near places where the unwary traveller may be victimized by ominous powers and horrifying creatures.

The *Śatarudrīya Stotram* represents Rudra's physical appearance in such graphic and various terms that one wonders why he was never represented in iconographic form during the Vedic period. In spite of an abundance of ferocious and grotesque qualities in his character, he is said to be of benign (*aghora*) and auspicious (*śiva*) form, "not

dreadful or vile-looking". Long golden locks flow down his blue-colored neck onto a body that is described as brown, copper, ruddy and bluish-red or purple. His two arms are invoked apprehensively as the wielders of the bow and arrows which are sources of both disease and health. He is both tall and dwarfish.[26] With his one-thousand eyes he views the entire world at all points on the compass at a single glance. Clad in an animal skin, he leads the life of a rude uncultured woodsman or mountaineer (*giritra, giriśanta, giriśa*). In this state, in wild areas, Rudra is the fearless generalissimo of countless bands of spirit-troops (*satvanā*), "innumerable Rudras dwelling in the sky, in the atmosphere and on the earth...." These attendants of Rudra are imagined to take the form of ghosts, goblins and "grotesque and ferocious spirits" who roam about the countryside in the dead of night (*naktaṁcarabdhyas*). As extensions or external manifestations of the spiritual essence of Rudra, these beings are fierce (*krūra*) and deformed (*virūpa*) in appearance, with blue necks (*nīlagrīvā*) and white throats (*śitikaṇṭhā*). By extension of this same role, Rudra is the Master of animals (*paśupati*). He lives with the animals of the forests and deserts, knows their life-patterns and controls their destinies. While he is also said to abide with cattle in the shelter of cattle-pens, Rudra's role as *Paśupati* seems, during the Vedic period, to place him primarily in the company of wild and untamed beasts that haunt uncultivated areas in forests and deserts and threaten both men and animals with injury and death.

He prefers isolated places frequented by wild beasts, goblins, and malicious spirits for he is characteristically identified with paths (*srutyāya*), roads (*pahyāya*), mountain slopes (*nīpyāya*) and rugged areas (*katyāya*), with forests (*vanyāya*), woods (*araṇyāya*) and crossroads (*catuṣpathyāya*).

Further, Rudra is the patron deity of various classes of artisans, including blacksmiths, carpenters and huntsmen. Like Pūṣan, with whom he shares a number of other traits in common, he is the divine pathfinder who guides and protects travellers through areas that are fraught with ominous dangers. As an inhabitant of the wilderness areas he is the god of tribal peoples, both Āryan and non-Āryan, who inhabit the hills and forests of northern India: the Niṣādas (wild aboriginal tribes of non-Āryan ancestry, probably hunters, robbers and fishermen and possibly identifiable with the present-day Bhils who live in western and north-central India, renowned in the past for brigandage and lawlessness); and the Puñjiṣṭhas (fishermen and,

according to Mahīdhara, fowlers). He manifests himself to "female water-bearers", "in sprouting grass", "in dessicated things", "in the dust and the mist", "among herds", and "in cattle-pens". He exists "in mind, the cloud and the lightning", "in incantations, punishments and prosperity".

His devotees invoke him on his ferocious side and attempt to placate his wrath by reciting epithets and character traits which reflect his capacity to visit misfortune upon whomever he wills. Among his many terrifying (*ghora*) aspects, are these: fierce (*ugrāya*) and terrific (*bhīmāya*), master of animals (*paśūnāṁpatāye*) whose shafts inflict animals with disease and disaster, "the bellowing lord of combat-troops", "lord of the cheater, the arch-deceiver, brigands... murderers and stealers", "lord of the deformed (*virūpebhya*) and the omniform (*viśvarūpebhya*)".

Thus far, this survey of the conception of the character and roles of Rudra in the *Śatarudrīya Stotram* has focused entirely upon the terrifying and destructive side of his nature. However, inasmuch as this litany is a hymn of praise recited primarily to gratify Rudra and to cultivate his benevolent grace, the number of benign epithets attributed to him far exceed the malignant. As benevolent provider and protector from misfortune, Rudra is addressed as "advocate" or "deliverer" (*adhyavocad*); "first divine healer (*prathamodaivyo bheṣak*)"; "he whose medicines bring continual healing"; "most benevolent one (*sumangalaḥ*)"; "bountiful (*miḍhuṣe*)"; and more than that, "most bountiful (*miḍhuṣṭama*)"; "lord of the prosperous (*puṣṭānām pataye*)"; "lord of food and of all moving things"; "he who extended the earth (*bhuvantaye*)"; "bestower of welfare (*śangave*)"; and "source of prosperity (*śambhavāya*)". Finally, a few of the epithets which will become his most prominent names in the epics and *purāṇas* appear in this hymn: i.e., Auspicious One (*śivāya*) and Cause of Prosperity (*śaṅkarāya*), as well as, Divine Lord (*īśāno bhagavaḥ*).

Most of the western interpreters of this hymn (among whom we might mention Arbman, Hillebrandt, Weber, Macdonell, and Barth) have tended to adopt an overly simplified view of Rudra in this text, by stressing his fierce and destructive aspects to the almost total neglect of his benevolent and auspicious features.[27] True, many of the epithets and attributes assigned to Rudra in this hymn reflect a deity who manifests himself to mankind in the form of a formidable, frightening and even destructive power. But Rudra must be viewed as a deity whose nature is quintessentially bi-polar

and ambivalent.[28] He is the god from whom all the opposites spring into dynamic manifestation (life and death, good and evil, pleasure and pain, beauty and ugliness). He is the divine agent of both procreation and dissolution, throughout the natural and social spheres. He is the divine source and cause of both illness and health, poverty and wealth, terror and bliss. When he manifests himself by means of his auspicious and sublime form (*śiva-*, *aghora-tanū*), he provides all the energies required by living beings for survival and growth. When, on the other hand, he operates by means of his terrible and demonic aspects (*bhīma-*, *ghora-tanū*), he removes living creatures by withholding those same life-supports. Hence, he must be viewed, even at this early period of Indian religious history, as a deity who encompasses a wealth of traits, powers and activities, a complex network of features that resists every attempt to derive a univocal pattern.

The Character of Rudra in the *Śatarudrīya* Oblation

Our understanding of the precise nature of Rudra and of the type of "religious consciousness" which he provokes in his devotees can be brought into sharper focus by surveying his various modes of manifestation and activity recorded in the *Brāhmaṇical* texts pertaining to the *Śatarudrīya-homam*. Like the Psalms in the Old Testament,[29] plainsong chants in the Catholic Missal[30] and congregational hymns in Protestant hymnals, the hymns in the Vedas were not intended to serve as mere "musical accompaniment" to the visible actions of the liturgy. Rather, like the Hebrew and Christian counterparts, the Vedic hymns were composed and recited as canticle equivalents to the outward activities of worship. As stated earlier, the hymns of praise, the visible movements of the rituals and the sacrificial oblations are three different aspects of a single mode of religious veneration.

According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (IX. 1.1ff.), where the prescriptions for the performance of the *Śatarudrīya-homam* are given in greatest detail, the rite is said to be composed of 425 oblations offered into the sacrificial fire at the completion of the piling up of the fire-altar (*agnicayana*) when Agni,[31] the divine personification of the sacred fire, has come to be identified with Rudra.[32] This homologization of Agni and Rudra symbolizes the fact that the sacred fire, which has received great quantities of *ghee* (clarified butter) at regular intervals during the construction of the altar, has

begun to flare up and crackle with impressive and terrifying (*raudra*) force.[33] The altar fire is the outward and visible manifestation of the dual divinity, Rudra-Agni in his most awesome and terrifying form (*ghora-tanū*).[34] Or, in more metaphysical terms, the altar fire has been transmuted into a symbol for the divine force which courses through plants, men, animals and celestial bodies with a powerful thrust that threatens to destroy the very forms of life it sustains.

After the gods have bestowed upon Rudra-Agni "that highest form" (*rūpamuttamaṁ*) that is, immortality (*amṛta*)[35] He stands upon the altar in the form of the sacrificial flame "longing for food" (*annamicchamāna*-s). Knowing of Rudra's voracious appetite, even the gods are fearful that he might do them harm.[36] In order to placate His wrath and evoke his pleasure, the gods determine to provide Him with food, in the knowledge that, "thereby we shall appease (*śamāyama*, gratify, soothe) Him".

At this stage, the officiating priest recites a *mantra* containing a "theological pun" on the Sanskrit terms for "appeased" (*śānta*), and "one-hundred" (*śata*). This "play on words" provides the necessary mystical connection between the name of the *homaṁ* and the primary objective of the ritual itself. The text states that they gathered the food called *Śāntadevatya* and satisfied (*śamayaṁs*) with it. Inasmuch as they satisfied (*śam*) the god (*deva*) by means of this food, it is known as *Sāntadevatya* (i.e., that which satisfies the god) and *Śāntadevatya* is the esoteric equivalent of *Śatarudrīya*, "for the gods adore the esoteric" (*paro'kṣakāmāhidevāḥ*).

The officiating priest (*adhvaryu*) then offers an oblation of wild sesame seeds (*jartilair*), which represent both cultivated (*grāmyaṁ*) and wild-growing (*āraṇyaṁ*) foods,[37] in order to satisfy Rudra-Agni's hunger and to provide him with the nourishment which he demands for the successful performance of his divine function. The priest then places these sesame seeds upon an *arka*-leaf (*arkaparṇena*)[38] and deposits that offering upon three enclosing-stones (*pariśritsu*) which represent the three Agnis (the earthly, atmospheric and celestial fires, respectively).[39] By offering the oblation to Rudra-Agni, the mystical homologization between these two gods is ritually completed. In verse 9 of *Adhyāya* 1, the *Brāhmaṇa* provides an 'esoteric' rationale for presenting the *arka*-leaf to Rudra-Agni.[40] "He offers with an *arka*-leaf; for the tree arose from the resting place of that deity (*devasyāśayād*); he thus satisfies (*prīṇāti*) him with his own portion (*bhāgena*), with his own life-sap (*rasena*)."

Following this presentation the officiant offers an oblation composed of flour made from *Gavedhukā* grass (*Coix Barbata*).[41] The offering is laid upon the stones on the altar, for "the *Gavedhukā* plants sprang forth (*samabhavan*) in that spot where the deity lies exhausted (*visrastāśayat*)". In this manner, the deity is reinvigorated and gratified by his own life-blood (*rasena*) and by his own portion (i.e., the substance which constitutes his own being or essence).

The priest is enjoined by the *Brāhmaṇa* to place the oblation upon each one of the three enclosing stones (*pariśritsu*) situated to the rear of the sacrificial area (i.e., the west corner of the left wing of the bird-shaped altar). Beginning at the southernmost tip of the area and moving toward the north,[42] each of these stones is taller than the preceding one: the first is knee-high, the next navel-high, and the last head-high. Each stone represents one of the three levels of the universe. The offering presented at a particular level of the body of the sacrificer gratifies the Rudras who abide at the corresponding level of the cosmos. By means of these three offerings of food and ritual invocation (*svāhā*), all the Rudras throughout the universe are nourished and soothed.[43] The officiant presents this offering while standing on the north side of the altar and facing the north.[44] He thereby satisfies Rudra "in his own region" for "in that region lies the abode of this deity" (*ha diśyetasya devasya gṛhāḥ*). Once the hunger of the Rudras has been satiated and their wrath tranquillized, they depart from the sacrificial area in the house of the sacrificer to the regions to the north and, henceforth, cease to threaten the health and welfare of the sacrificer and his family.[45]

The myth which the *Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB. IX 1.1.6-7) provides as a symbolic rationale for the performance of the *Śatarudrīya-homam*, states that when Prajāpati (the Creator and Lord of the Creatures) had become impotent in the course of the year, the gods abandoned him for lack of support and sustenance—all the gods, that is, except one, Wrath (*manyu*). For wrath always remains and asserts itself when a creature has become hungry and weak. Wrath expanded and remained steadfastly attached to Prajāpati. This state of fury drove Prajāpati to tears (*rodit*)[46] and his tears fell down upon Wrath. The water of Prajāpati's tears mixed with the fire of Wrath and from that compound sprang up the divine embodiment of Wrath and Terror (i.e. Rudra), possessing one hundred heads, one thousand eyes, and one hundred quivers. The remaining drops of the mixture spread over the entire world in countless numbers (*asaṁkhyātā*).

Because these multitudinous creatures sprang (*samabhavaṁ*) from the crying (*ruditās*), they came to be called "rudras" (i.e., the cryers or howlers).[47] Meanwhile, this multicephalus, multi-eyed and multi-quivered creature, Rudra, who is the unified embodiment of all the Rudra-powers, stood before the gods, with bow and arrow prepared, in his quest for food (*annamicchmānas*), striking them with fear (*bhīṣayamāṇo*). And, as a result of the continuing presence of this offspring of the wrath-filled tears of Prajāpati, "the gods were afraid of him".

The gods then appealed to Prajāpati to aid them in acquiring an antidote to their terror. In response to the gods' plea, Prajāpati replied, "Gather food (*annamasnai sambharata*) for him and you will gratify (*śamayata*) him, thereby".

Once the priest has completed the nourishing of Rudra with the oblations of sesame seeds and the gruel of *gavedhukā* flour, he proceeds to gratify the deity further by muttering the various formulae of the *Śatarudrīya Stotram*. In the course of these he recites that most salutary of invocations, *Svāhā*,[48] (*sv-āhā* or *su-ādhā*, lit. "salutations, hail") between each set of 80 formulae (ŚB IX 1.1.21). The mystical identification of the oblations with the formulae and the power of both to gratify the deity is affirmed by the ritual association of "the eighties" (*aśityāṁ*, i.e., the 9 sections or *anuvākas* of the litany) and the sacrificial food (*āśita*, food): "eighties means food, for by means of food (and formulae) he gratifies him, thus" (verse 21). The priest offers obeisance to Rudra's wrath, his two mighty arms that wield the bow and arrows, to the bands of clansmen which sprang from Prajāpati's tears of wrath, and to Prajāpati himself, who, in completion of the mystical identification of all the gods and all the elements of the sacrifice, is linked with Agni and the Year. The *Adhvaryu* continues to gratify Rudra by "invoking him by his names" and identifying Rudra-Agni with the Year, the seasons, the three realms and the layers of the altar.

The official performance of the rite is concluded with a recitation of the "unstringing formulae".[49] These *mantra*-s are recited for the purpose of "unstringing" the bows of the countless Rudras "at a thousand leagues" and, thereby, rendering them powerless to harm the sacrificer and his relatives. This series of oblations is presented in reverse order to those described in vss. 11-13; that is, in a descending pattern from the mouth, to the navel, and, finally, to the knee. In this manner, the circuit of ritual oblations is completed and, at

the cosmic level, the entire world-order is rendered secure from all the disruptive effects of Rudra's wrath.

With the completion of the "descending" rites (*pratyavarohān*), along with the final propitiations of the Rudras at the three levels of the universe, the *yajamāna* casts the *arka*-leaf and *arka*-stick into the "pit" (*cātvāle*), which the composer of this *Brāhmaṇa* takes to mean the depositing of implements into the sacred fire to be consumed. The *Śatarudrīya* is then identified symbolically with the altar, the Year and Agni—all of which are composed of 360 components—and with the Great Litany (*mahad uktam*), with which the rite shares in common the possession of twenty-five parts (i.e., formulae) on either side of the "eighties" (again, formulae). The *yajamāna* brings the rite to a close with a series of circumambulations of the *vedi* while sprinkling it on all sides with water (in order to drive all evil and pain into the region of *Nirṛti* located in the south-western direction). This act is accompanied by the formulation of numerous mystical connections between constitutive parts of the altar and corresponding realities within the cosmos. The final resolution of the *homa* is realized by symbolically identifying the many facets of the rite with various natural phenomena and the divine powers that rule over them. This is done with a rather complex formula equating Rudra-Agni, Prajāpati, the altar, the *Gāyatrī-mantra*, the *Sāman*-hymns, the three levels of the universe, the two cosmic luminaries and Agni's "highest form, immortality".

The Relationship between Concepts of Divinity and Religious Experience in the Śatarudrīya

While the most obvious goal of this *homa* seems to be the appeasement of Agni-Rudra's wrath and the acquisition of his benevolent grace on behalf of the sacrificer and the family, other, secondary objectives are sought as well. The series of mystical correspondences which stand out most prominently in this rite (e.g., the identification of the bricks of the altar with Prajāpati, of Prajāpati with Agni-Rudra, of the *rasa* of the oblations with the *rasa* of both the deities and the universe) suggest that the rite is believed to serve as a means of assembling and reintegrating the various powers in the universe which have become fragmented and dispersed during the course of a year and by reintegrating such powers to infuse the entire cosmos

with new life. So conceived, the sacrifice is to be understood as that single most efficacious mechanism for the establishment and maintenance of a proper equilibrium among the various centers of power (i.e., gods, men and the natural world) and for the promotion of the uninterrupted flow of the life-forces throughout the world. In the same way, the sacrificial arena is that privileged place within the finite world where gods and men meet in spiritual communion and where each receives from the other necessary life-supports.

We have argued that previous interpretations of Rudra as a wholly "demonic deity" who provokes only fear and dread are simplistic and one-sided.[50] But even if such were the case, those responses to a deity like Rudra which take the form of fear, awe, and dread should not be interpreted in purely "negative" terms.[51] On the contrary we could argue that, when properly understood, those experiences which threaten man's sense of self-confidence and well-being (whether by divine, human, or animal agencies) have "positive" as well as "negative" consequences.

This ambivalent nature of the religious experience has been observed by a variety of scholars of religion. Richard R. Niebuhr, for one, explores the nature of religious experience.[52] While Niebuhr's analysis is general and does not regard all the varieties of religious experience and response to it, his analysis is appropriate for a consideration of the relationship between the concept of divinity and the religious experience expressed in the *Śatarudrīya*. He contends that *fear*, especially that type of fear which occurs within the context of an encounter with an extraordinary power, should be viewed as an "ambiguous" experience, a dual state of mind in which feelings of buoyant joy and benumbing awe are co-mingled. That is, fear is not merely a highly restricted and specialized emotional response to particular objects or situations. Rather, fear is that all-pervasive and inescapable sense of living in a state of finitude and mortality. Suffering, as he defines it, is the ambivalent sense of both "being diminished and being enlarged". Both suffering and the concomitant experience of faith form "a boundary of existence, an ever-present element of consciousness" in a world that appears to us to be a "field of energies, converging on us, shaping us, distending us, shattering us and sending us on paths we have not chosen for ourselves".[53] So conceived, suffering is the "determinant of all existence", the basis of man's sense of creaturehood. Faith or faithfulness, which both complements and incorporates

the element of anxiety, Niebuhr defines as "the manner in which human being comports itself within its world of power", the "way in which he accepts and addresses himself to his situation as a suffering being". Because of the paradoxical nature of human existence, the experience of faith necessarily occurs within a state of suffering and contains elements of conflict and strife, coupled with joy and harmony. Fear, whether viewed primarily as a religious, existential or psychological category, must be interpreted against the background of the dynamic, ever-changing field of human existence in a world of power.

Rudra, more than any other deity in the Vedic pantheon, manifests himself to mankind as this "infinite energy and environing, shaping power that approaches us on alien terms", of which Niebuhr speaks in a later portion of this same work.[54] It is the alien or "wholly other" quality of Rudra's appearances and activities within the finite world that gives rise to the responses of awe and terror in his devotees.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we argue that, in the *Śatarudrīya* hymn and rite, Rudra is represented as a deity who uses his divine power to create multiple manifestations with ambivalent qualities.[55] In part, the fluidity of his nature (i.e., his capacity to divide his one divine nature into numerous facets and, at the same time, to integrate within himself many disparate and antithetical phenomena in nature and society), served as a pre-condition for his elevation to the status of High God in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* and *The Mahābhārata*. Unlike most of the other Vedic gods, who lacked either the degree of concreteness (e.g., Varuṇa) or the proper level of generality (e.g., Pūṣan) required for the development of a High God status, Rudra commanded a sufficient degree of both universality and particularity to fulfil the spiritual needs of a wide variety of people over an extensive geographical area and through a lengthy expanse of time.

Even as early as the time of the *Śatarudrīya* (ca. 1000 B.C.), Rudra's character is marked by a configuration of traits, powers and deeds that are, at once, antithetical and complementary. Though One in essence, he is identified as the divine power which both creates and destroys, energizes and dissolves all forms of life. His ambivalent nature made possible the multiplication of his

manifestations (*mūrtis*), during the epic and post-epic periods, in such a way that he can appear to be either malevolent (*ghora, bhairava*) or benevolent (*aghora, śiva*) on different occasions or both simultaneously.

When these observations concerning Rudra's character in the *Śatarudrīya* are considered together with our understanding of fear/dread as an ambiguous experience, the conclusion is hard to resist that Rudra must be seen as a deity whose nature is far more complex, exalted and multivalent than a majority of Indologists have recognized. Because he is revered as the divine source of wealth and poverty, health and illness, life and death, joy and grief, his presence provokes responses from his devotees that range from veneration and affection, to fear and dread—religious feelings that are in perfect harmony with the multifarious character of his divine nature. Even in this early period of the history of Indian religion, Rudra is recognized as a multivalent manifestation of divine power, whose activities serve both to delimit and expand, threaten and sustain the world and all the creatures that abide therein. In the religious terminology popularized by Rudolf Otto, Rudra is the *numinous* par excellence, the deity in whom The Sacred is revealed in its full multiplicity and ambiguity. As such, Rudra is the Divine reflection of man's perception of the nature of Life itself.

Notes

In the following notes, abbreviations for basic texts will be used, as follows: Mbh–*Mahābhārata*; TS–*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*; ŚB–*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*; VS–*Vājasaneya Saṁhitā*; ṚV–*Ṛg Veda*; AV–*Atharva Veda*; SBE–*Sacred Books of the East*; TB–*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*; Sāṅkh. Br.–*Sāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa*; Āp. ŚS–*Āpastambha Srauta Sūtra.*

1. *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 3.
2. Śrī Aurobindo, *On the Veda.* (Pondicherry, 1956), pp. 49-50.
3. Consult E. Arbman, *Rudra.* Untersuchungen zum altindischen Glauben und Kultus, (Uppsala, 1922), esp. chap. I.
4. J. Gonda, *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism*: A Comparison, (London, 1970), p. 5.
5. A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology,* p. 74ff.; A.B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads,* (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), pp. 142-50; J. Gonda, *Epithets in the Ṛgveda,* (The Hague, 1959), p. 126ff.
6. *See* J. Gonda, *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism,* p. 3, 20-21.
7. R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems,* (Strassburg, 1913), p. 102ff.
8. *See* R.N. Dandekar, "Rudra in the Veda", *Journal of the University of Poona,* [Humanities Section], I.1 (1953): p. 94ff.
9. *Atharvaveda,* XI. 2.

10. A. Weber, *Indische Studien* (Berlin, 1853), II, p. 13ff.
11. *Vājasaneya Saṁhitā* XVI and *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, IV 5. 1-11.
12. Among the numerous translations of the *Śatarudrīya Stotram* into western languages, see the following: for a German translation of the *Taittirīya* rescension (of the Black Yajus School) of the text, with various readings of the *Kaṭhaka* and the *Vājasaneyī* versions, consult A. Weber, *Indische Studien* II, 13-47: the *Sukla Yajurveda* (also known as the *Vājasaneya*) text has been translated and transliterated by J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, (London, 1873), IV. pp. 322-31; also J. Eggeling, *The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Part IV, (*SBE* Vol. XLIII), 150-55; and the *Taittirīya* text by A.B. Keith, *The Veda of the Black Yajus School* entitled the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*. [*Harvard Oriental Series*, XIX], Cambridge, Mass., (1914), pp. 353-62.
13. Consult the following scholarly studies of the *Śatarudrīya Stotram*; E. Arbman, *Rudra*, pp. 221-53; R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, pp. 103-04; S. Bhattacharji, "Rudra from the Vedas to the *Mahābhārata*", *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, pp. 41, (1960), 86-89; R.W. Frazer, "Śaivism", *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, XI, p. 91ff. Concerning the *Śatarudrīya-homam*, see D.J. Hoens, *Śānti. A Contribution to Ancient Indian Religious Terminology*, (The Hague, 1951), pp. 128-33.
14. See my article, "Festival of Repentance: A Study of Mahāśivarātri", *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Baroda, 22 (1972), pp. 15-38.
15. V. Raghavan, *The Indian Heritage: An Anthology of Sanskrit Literature*, (Bangalore, India, 1956), p. 20ff.
16. Raghavan, *ibid.*, p. 21.
17. Consult esp. *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*, (v. 303-04), 308 for an assertion of its efficacy as an expiatory prayer.
18. Cf. *ŚB* IX 1.1.1-2.42 where specifications of the ritual performance, together with the appropriate recitations, are presented in elaborate detail.
19. *See* T.R. Srinivasa Ayyangar, trans. *Śaiva Upaniṣads*, (The Adyar Library, 1953).
20. Appar, II. 5, cited in K.A. Nilakantha Sastri, "An Historical Sketch of Śaivism", in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, (Calcutta, 1956), Vol. IV, p. 70.
21. Consult J. Gonda, *Notes on Names and the Name of God in Ancient India* [Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse, Akademie van Wetenschappen, Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Vol. 75, no. 4] (Amsterdam, 1970), pp. 57-76.
22. A hymn composed of a thousand names is addressed to Śiva in the *Mbh.* (XII 285 and XIII 17) and to Viṣṇu (XIII 149) and a briefer hymn to Umā-Durgā, the malevolent aspects of Śiva's consort, Pārvatī, (IV 6. pp. 148-203). Cf. the *Hymn to the Greatness of the Goddess* (*Devī-māhātmya-stotram* or the *Śrī-durgā-saptasati*), from the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, [Bibliotheca Indica], trans. F.E. Pargiter, (Calcutta, 1904), Cantos *LXXXI-XCIII*.
23. *See* J. Gonda, *Notes on Names*, p. 20ff.
24. L. Renou formulates this principle in most succinct terms as follows: "The duty of the *ṛṣi*-s was to ensure the ordered functioning of the world and of religious ceremonial by reproducing the succession of cosmic events, the *ordo-rerum*, in their acts and in the imagery they conceived. . Seen in this light, the Veda is a vast magical synthesis expressed in symbolic terms. The images of the Vedas have ritual significance in themselves; they bring

about the ordered functioning of a universe which is itself conceived as the scene of a vast sacrifice, the proto-type of the man-made sacrifice." *Religions of Ancient India,* (London, 1953), pp. 17-18.

25. E.C. Dimock, *The Literatures of India.* An Introduction, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 47ff.
26. *TS* IV 5.5. h, i.
27. Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*: An Historical Sketch, (London & New York, 1954), II, p. 142; and Julius Eggeling, *The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (Sacred Books of the East, vol. XLIII), p. 150 ff.
28. Wendy D. O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva.* (London, 1973), p. 83ff.
29. *See* S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship.* Trans. T.M. Horner, (Philadelphia, 1967).
30. Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* (London, 1945).
31. See *ŚB* (I 7.3.8) where it is said that "Agni is the god known among the eastern peoples as Śarva (the archer), among the Bāhīkas as Bhava (source of Being), as Paśupati (lord of beasts or cattle), as Rudra and as Agni." And the commentator, *Sāyaṇa* (Weber's edition, p. 124) adds, "Although, based upon the distinction of countries, there is a distinction of names...but the god (so-named) is One". *Cf. Śaṇkh. Brh.* VI 1.1-9. Again, at *ŚB* I 7.3.8 it is said that "the name Agni is the most auspicious (*agnir iti eva śāntam*) and all the others are inauspicious".
32. The *TS* (II 2.10) presents a legendary account of the identity between Rudra and Agni, according to which Agni stole the store of wealth which the gods had retrieved from the demons and on being forced to return it, wept (*arodit*). From that time Agni came to be known as Rudra (derived from the root, √*rud*= "to weep"). Cf. *TS* I 5.1.
33. *See* E.W. Hopkin's remarks in *Epic Mythology,* p. 218, n. 1, to the effect that Rudra is of the nature of fire (*agnimaya*) and Viṣṇu of the moon (*somātmaka*) and together they constitute the entire world. This claim is rejected by J. Gonda in his *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism,* p. 95f. Cf. *ŚB* III 6.3.19.
34. Cf. *Mbh.* VIII 202,41 where the body of Śiva is said to be composed of the dual elements of Agni and Soma (i.e., fire and nectar): *ūrubhyāṁ ardhaṁ āgneyaṁ somārdhaṁ ca śivā tanuḥ.*
35. The precise meaning of this statement is uncertain because of the multivalence of the term for "immortality" (*a-mṛ-ta*="not dead") in Sanskrit literature. From the time of the *Brāhmaṇa*-s (*ŚB* X 4.1.22) the juice of the Soma plant is identified with the moon, which itself is conceived as the cup containing the beverage of immortality. See J. Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion,* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965), p. 58ff.; G. Dumezil, *Le Festin d'Immortalité,* (Paris, 1924) p. 110ff. Since the offering of Soma plays no role in the *Śatarudrīya-homam,* it would, perhaps, be unjustified to link *amṛta* in this passage with the Soma offering. *Amṛta* is also identified by the Vedic poets with the waters (*RV* I 23.19, *apsu antar amṛtaṁ*) which served as food (VI 49.16; III 26.7) and medicines (*bheṣājaṁ*) for the gods. The gods are distinguished from the demons and from human beings by their possession of *amṛta* (*AV* XXX 19.10), the 'food of life' (*ŚB* I 2.1.20). The statement that the gods "bestowed upon Agni the ultimate form of

immortality" seems to mean that they provided him with a sacred abode upon the seven-layered altar and kindled him to such great heights by means of the sacrificial oblations that he came to be mystically identified with Rudra.

36. *Devā abibharyuyadhai no'yam na hiṅsyāditi.*
37. By presenting Rudra with a cereal grain representing both cultivated and uncultivated lands, all areas are protected from the ill-effects of his wrath.
38. *Arkaparṇa* is the name of the leaf of the plant *Calotropic Gigantea,* which was believed to possess sacred powers and was associated primarily with the rituals dedicated to the Maruts or Rudras, the offspring and "doubles" of Rudra. The root-bark was used in ancient times for medicinal purposes. The ancient Arabs also held the plant in great reverence and used it in numerous rites dedicated to the worship of the Sun. It is the *Ushar* of the Arabs and the *Khark* of the Persians—both terms used to designate milk-yielding plants. Abu Hanifeh was perhaps the first Arab writer to give an explicit account of the plant but much more detailed information will be found in the writings of Ebn Baithar (trans. by Southeinier, II. 193). *Arka,* a term derived from the root $\sqrt{arc}$="to shine or blaze", and by extension, "to praise, honor or worship", obviously stands in close symbolic relationship with fire, lightning and other sources of luminosity (esp. the Sun, to which *arka* refers in many instances). The rationale for employing the *arkaparṇa* in this rite must rest upon the connections in the oblation between the altar-fire (*agni*) and Rudra, the representative of Agni in his sinister aspect. The blazing fire itself is an expression of the awe-inspiring wrath (*krodha, manyu*) of Rudra. Concerning the botanical and medicinal properties of the *arka*-leaf, consult the following sources: *Economic Botany,* Vol. 13, pp. 205-42; P. Maheshwari and S.L. Tandon, *Agriculture and Economic Development in India,* 232ff.; *Kew Bulletin,* (1900), pp. 8-12; *Revue horticole,* Ser. 2, Vol. 3, April 1844-March 1845, pp. 1-2.
39. Cf. *TB* (I 7.1.2) where it is related that the Devas and Asuras were engaged in conflict, whereupon the gods said to Agni, "We shall prevail with you as our champion" to which Agni replied, "I will transform myself into three aspects. He did so to the end that Agni became the first part, Rudra, the second and Varuṇa, the third."
40. According to J. Eggeling (*SBE* 43, p. 157, n. 1) the *arka*-leaf is substituted for the customary sacrificial ladle—perhaps, another feature of this rite that sets it apart from the rites customarily offered to deities other than Rudra. According to the scholiast on the *VS,* Mahīdhara, in his gloss on XVI. 1, the priest offers oblations on each of the three fire-stones, holding the *arka*-leaf in his right hand and a piece of *arka*-wood in his left hand.
41. I have thus far been unable to discover any modern botanical studies of this species of grass.
42. The *Mbh.* (XIII 97.12) also dictates that offerings to Soma be presented in the north which is the location of *Somaloka* (*Cf.* XIII 102.29) in agreement with *ŚB* VIII 6.1.8.
43. Cf. *Ap. ŚS* XVII 11, 4 : 1.c.
44. Those lines with double invocations are presented to the Rudras who are most ferocious and difficult to appease.
45. By this means the evil effects of Rudra's presence are expelled from the three

levels of the universe. See *Kaṭha Saṁhitā* 21.6 and *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṁhitā*, which uses the verb *avayajate*, "he expels by sacrifice".

46. Consult *ŚB* (VI 1.3.7ff.) which relates the story of the birth of Rudra from the union of Prajāpati and his wife's sister, Uṣas. See also *Sāṅkh. Br.* VI. 1.
47. See *Sāyaṇa's* commentary on *Ṛg-veda* I 114.1 where he provides six different etymologies for the word "rudra". He himself prefers the meaning derived from the Sanskrit root $\sqrt{rud}$="to weep" and this interpretation has been adopted traditionally by Indian pandits as the most authoritative derivation.
48. *Svāhā*, the oblation personified, is the daughter of Dakṣa (ritual dexterity) and the spouse of Agni (sacrificial fire) but in other contexts the wife of Rudra-Paśupati as well. *See* Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, (Oxford University Press, 1899), p. 1284.
49. The "unstringing formulae" (VS XVI. 54-63) are recited as verbal counterparts to the corresponding oblation. *See ŚB* (IX 1.1.27ff.).
50. Notably, the studies of E. Arbman, A.B. Keith, A.A. Macdonell, *et al.*
51. Consult R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, (London, 1962), p. 43. Even a scholar of the erudition and reputation of J. Gonda failed to stress the implications of the assertion that Rudra is an ambivalent and unpredictable deity. See *Viṣṇuism and Śivaism*, p. 4.
52. See Richard R. Niebuhr, *Experiential Religion*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 77-106, from which I have drawn much of this interpretation of the concept of fear.
53. Compare Gautama, the Buddha's doctrine of *dukkha* (=ill, imperfection, disease) which presents the same sense of ambiguity between fear and hope, anxiety and confidence as is expressed in Niebuhr's statement.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
55. A highly suggestive paper regarding "the use of multiple bodily parts to denote the divine", has just come to my attention, but regrettably too late to be incorporated in the present study. For an elaboration of the same basic principle discussed in this paper, consult, Doris Srinivasan, "The Religious Significance of Multiple Bodily Parts to Denote the Divina: Finds from the Rig Veda", *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* XXIX. 2, (1975), pp. 137-79.

ŚATARUDRĪYA STOTRAM

(Vājasaneya-Saṁhitā XVI)

1. Reverence to thy wrath, O Rudra, and to thine arrow, reverence; reverence to thy bow, and reverence to both thy arms.

2. By means of thine auspicious form, O Rudra, [that is] not dreadful or vile-looking, with that most salutary form, shine down upon us, O mountain-dweller.

3. That arrow, O mountain-dweller, which thou holdest in thy hand to shoot, render it auspicious, O mountain protector, [that it] may not harm the human realm.

4. By means of efficacious utterances, O mountain-dweller, we invoke thee, that all our people may be free from disease and contented.

5. The Advocate, that foremost divine healer, hath interceded for us; crushing all serpents, strike down and disperse all *Yātudhānis* (sorceresses).

6. The copper-colored one, who is ruddy, brown, and gracious, together with the Rudras who, by the thousands, surround him within all the regions, we deprecate their wrath.

7. He who slithers off, blue-necked and red-colored, he whom the herdsmen and female water-carriers have observed, may he, when seen, be gracious to us.

8. Reverence be to the blue-necked, thousand-eyed one, the bountiful; even to his attendant spirits, I offer reverence.

9. Unfasten the bowstring from the two ends of thy bow and cast down, O holy one, the arrows that are in thy hand.

10. Unstrung be the bow of the one with braided-hair and arrowless be his quiver; his arrows have vanished and his quiver is bare.

11. The weapon, O most bountiful one, that is in thy hand, thy bow, with that, rendered harmless, protect us on every side.

12. May the missile from thy bow avoid us from every direction and do thou lay down thy quiver [at great remove] from us.

13. Having loosened thy bow, O hundred-eyed and thousand-quivered one, and having blunted the tips of thy arrows, be gracious and kindly toward us.

14. Reverence be to thy fierce weapon, unstrung; reverence be to both thine arms and to thy bow.

15. Refrain from bringing harm to the great and the small among us, harm not the growing boy, harm not the full-grown man. Slay not the father among us, slay not the mother here, and to our own precious bodies, do no harm.

16. Harm us not in our seed or in our offspring, harm us not in our life or in our cattle or horses.

17. Reverence be to the golden-armed commander of troops, to the lord of the quarters, reverence be to the trees with greenlocks, to the master of animals, yellowish-red like sprouting grass, to the radiant, to the lord of paths, the yellow-haired wearer of the sacred thread, to the lord of the prosperous, be reverence.

18. Reverence be to the tawny one, the piercer, reverence be

to the lord of food, reverence be to the weapon of Bhava, to the lord of mobile creatures, reverence be to Rudra with bended bow, to the lord of fields, be reverence; reverence be to the unassailable charioteer, to the lord of forests.

19. Reverence be to the red one, the ruler...to the lord of the trees...to him who extended the earth, who provides deliverance ...to the lord of plants, to the shrewd merchant, to the lord of thickets, to the bellowing lord of combat-troops, who causes foes to weep.

20. Reverence be to him who runs at full gait, to the running, to the leader of armies...to the victorious, to the piercer, to the lord of assailants, to the gigantic swordsman, to the lord of robbers...to the glider, to the prowler, to the lord of forests.

21. Reverence be to the cheater, to the arch-deceiver, to the lord of brigands, to the bearer of sword and quiver, to the lord of thieves...to the archers, the murderers, to the chief of stealers, to the cimeters, to nocturnal prowlers, to the lord of plunderers.

22. Reverence be to the turbaned mountaineer, to the lord of poachers...to those who carry bows and to those who carry arrows, to those who extend [their bow] and those who fix [their arrows], to those who draw [the bow] and those who release [the arrow], be reverence.

23. Reverence be to you who discharge and to you who pierce, to you who sleep and to you who wake, to you who lie down and to you who sit, to you who stand still and to you who run.

24. Reverence be to congregations and to lords of congregations, to horses and to masters of horses, to you who wound and to you who pierce, to rampaging armies of extensive troops.

25. Reverence be to you troops and to you lords of troops, to you hosts and to you lords of hosts, to you scoundrels and to you lords of scoundrels, to you who are deformed and to you who are omniform.

26. Reverence be to you armed-forces and to you commanders of armed-forces, to you who [drive] chariots and to you who are without chariots, to you charioteers and to you horsemen, to you who are great and to you who are small.

27. ...to you carpenters and to you chariot-artisans, to you potters, and to you blacksmiths, to you Niṣādas and to you Puñjiṣṭhas, to you dog-keepers and to you huntsmen.

28. ...to you dogs and to you dog-masters, to Bhava, to Rudra,

to Śarva, to Paśupati, to Nīlagrīva and to Śitikaṇṭha.

29. ...to the wearer of braided-hair and to him with shaven head, to him with a thousand eyes and to him with a hundred bows, to the mountain-dweller and to the dazzling one, to the most bountiful and to the archer.

30. ...to the short and to the dwarf, to the mighty and to the full-grown, to the old and to the aging, to the chief and to the foremost.

31. ...to the swift and to the agile, to the quick and to the speedy, to him in the billowing waves and to the bellowing one, to him of the flowing stream and to him of the island.

32. Reverence be to the eldest and to the youngest, to the first-born and to the later-born, to the midmost and to the still-growing, to him who is the hindmost and to him who dwells in the depths.

33. Reverence be to him who dwells in *Sobha* (the city of the Gandharvas) and to him of the magical amulet, to the ally of Yama and to him who is tranquil, to the renowned and to him who is finished, to him of the fertile earth and to him of the threshing-floor.

34. ...to him of the woods and of the undergrowth, to him of the sound and of the echo, to him who [commands] swift armies and to him with swift chariots, to the hero and to the lancer.

35. ...to the helmeted and to the armored, to the mailed and the armed, to the renowned and to him whose armies are renowned, to him who abides in drums and him who beats those drums.

36. ...to the fierce and to the prudent, to the swordsmen and to the archers, to him who has keen arrows and who is armed with weapons, to him who has excellent weapons and a good bow.

37. ...to him who inhabits streams and roads, to him who dwells in wells and to him who abides at the bases of mountains, in watercourses, in lakes, in rivers and in pools.

38. ...in hollows and in cisterns, in the clear sky and the bright sunshine, in the clouds and in the lightning, in the rainy weather and in the clear weather.

39. ...in the wind, in the storm; reverence be to the house-dweller and to the house-protector, to Soma and to Rudra, to the copper-colored one and to him who is ruddy.

40. Reverence be to the bestower of welfare, to the master of animals, to the dreadful and to the terrible, to him who slays before and to him who slays from afar, to the slayer and to the extremely destructive, to the trees with green-locks and to the deliverer.

41. ...to the source of prosperity, to the source of happiness, to the cause of prosperity and to the cause of happiness, to the auspicious and to the most auspicious.

42. ...to him who exists on the far side and him who lives on the near side, to him who ferries across and to him who brings back, to him who is in the fords and to him who is on the banks, in sprouting grass and in the foam.

43. ...in gravel and in streams, in desert areas and in habitable places, to him of braided-hair and him of straight hair, to him who abides in barren soil and to him who inhabits busy roads.

44. ...among herds and in cattle-pens, on couches and in dwellings, in the heart, in whirlpools, in wells, and in abysses.

45. ...in desiccated things and in green things, in the dust and in the mist, in inaccessible places, in grassy areas, in the earth, and in ravines.

46. ...to him of the leaf, and to him of the fall of the leaf, to the threatener and to the slayer, to the one who captures and the one who drives away, to the makers of arrows and bows, to the beaming hearts of the gods, to the discerners, to the destroyers and to the indestructible.

47. O chaser, lord of Soma, roving (or, poor), of red and blue color, do not terrify or injure [any] of these people, of these cattle. May none of these be ill.

48. To the mighty Rudra we address these our hymns of praise, to the Lord of Heroes with braided-hair, that there may be prosperity for our men and cattle, that every (creature) in this village may be well-nourished and healthy.

49. O Rudra, with that auspicious form of thine, which is propitious and ever-healing, which is propitious [in that it] heals [all] diseases, be gracious to us that we may live.

50. May the missile of Rudra miss us, may the great malevolence of the Impetuous One depart from us. Loosen thy strong [bow that it may not harm our] nobles and be gracious to our children and descendants.

51. Most bountiful one, most benevolent, be kind and gracious to us; depositing thy weapon upon the farthest [or loftiest] tree, come, clad in a skin, approach us armed with thy bow [or spear].

52. O bright-red scatterer, reverence be to thee, O glorious one, may thy thousand arrows strike down someone other than us.

53. Thousands upon thousands are the arrows in thy arms, O

glorious one, the Lord, direct their points away from us.

54. The bows of the countless thousands of Rudras who are upon the earth, we loosen at a thousand leagues.

55. Of the Bhavas who are above the great ocean in the atmosphere, we loosen their bows at a thousand leagues.

56. Of the Rudras with blue-necks and white-throats who dwell in the sky, we loosen their bows at a thousand leagues.

57. Of the Śarvas with blue-necks and white-throats who roam about the nether-regions, etc.

58. Of those who have blue-necks and are ruddy, who are the color of sprouting-grass and live in trees, etc.

59. Of those overlords of the creatures, those who are devoid of the hair-tuft, those with braided-hair, etc.

60. Of those who protect the roads, providing nourishment, who fight for life, etc.

61. Of those who frequent the fords, armed with spears and quivers, etc.

62. Of those in food who disturb men while drinking from vessels, etc.

63. Of those Rudras, so numerous and more, who dwell in the regions, etc.

64. Reverence be to the Rudras who inhabit the sky, whose arrows are rain, to them ten (comm.: fingers) to the east, ten to the south, ten to the west, ten to the north, and ten upwards; to them be reverence, may they protect us, may they bless us. We deliver into their jaws him whom we despise and him who despises us.

65. Reverence be to the Rudras who [abide] in the atmosphere, whose arrows are the wind. To them ten [fingers] to the east, etc.

66. Reverence be to the Rudras who [abide] upon the earth, whose arrows are food. To them ten [fingers] to the east, etc.

8

THE *YĀGA*: A FIRE RITUAL OF SOUTH INDIA[1]

Fred W. Clothey

TWICE each day, six days of each year, a *yāga* (Tam: *Yākam*) or fire sacrifice of considerable significance is held deep in the inner recesses of a South Indian temple. This rare ritual, designed to rid the world of evil influences, combines features of Vedic, Āgamic, and Tantric symbolism and portrays something of the history and character of ritual life in orthodox Śaivism—especially Tantric Śaivism. Yet its importance lies not only in the clarity with which it preserves history, but also in the way in which it dramatizes the role ritual continues to play for many Hindus as a means of creating a more viable personal cosmos.

The Setting: The setting of the ritual is itself suggestive. The sacrifice is held in a temple at Tiruccenṭur, a village in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. Here, myth claims, the god Subrahmaṇya overwhelmed the demon Sūrapadma who had threatened to destroy the world. The god's conquest of the *asura* and the concomitant creation of the new order is intimated in the geography of the site, for the sea's lapping the shores of southeastern India suggest life's polarities—chaos and cosmos; primordiality and fulfilment; destruction and creation. As much as the place, the time is pregnant with meaning. The *yāga* is conducted during the festival of Skanda-Ṣaṣṭhī, a festival when the conquest of the *asura* is annually re-enacted. The time is the Tamil month of *Aippaci* (October-November) at the watershed of the northeast monsoon. The first day of Skanda-Ṣaṣṭhī when the first *yāga*-s are held, follows the new moon of *Aippaci*—a new moon which marks the symbolic midnight of the ritual year in Śaivism. In the cult of Subrahmaṇya (or Murukan as he is more commonly known in Tamil India) each new moon is the lunar moment of the god's birth.[2] On the first six days of this waxing moon—while Subrahmaṇya is mythically growing to full manhood and the festival of Skanda-Ṣaṣṭhī is re-enacting the gods' career—the *yāga* is held, twice each day: once shortly after dawn, and once shortly before dusk. The fire ritual thus becomes a central feature of the Skanda-Ṣaṣṭhī

festival today, dramatizing, like the festival itself, the symbolic significance of this time and place for mastering evil forces and initiating a new beginning.[3]

The temple at Tiruccenṭur is today one of the five wealthiest and busiest temples of Tamil Nadu. In addition to its mythological significance the temple has had a long and important history. It is possible that references in Tamil literature of the second and third centuries A.D. alluding to a Murukan shrine on the seashore known as Tirucīralaivāy refer to this pilgrimage center. However, the earliest known inscription associated with the temple is dated 875 A.D. and refers to a Pāṇṭiyan chieftain-king named Varakuna Māran.[4] The "Subrahmaṇya Stotra" and "Bhujanga", traditionally ascribed to Śaṅkara in the eighth century, apparently allude to this shrine though there is considerable doubt as to the real date and authorship of the hymns.

The temple was the probable scene of an unfortunate event in the era of European colonialism. The Dutch had concluded a treaty with the Portuguese in 1646, but two years later in retaliation for a Portuguese attack, the Dutch occupied this temple and fortified and ravaged it. For two years the Dutch withstood the attacks of ill-organized and ill-equipped locals. The Dutch eventually withdrew to Ceylon, taking the main icon of the temple with them. A local ruler, Vaṭamalayappa Piḷḷai, after whom a present *maṇṭapa* in the temple has been named, is said to have gone to sea and recovered the icon. Local tradition claims the original icon was cast into the sea, but was miraculously "restored" after much supplication to the deity.

More recently, renovation of the temple into its present state was started in 1868 thanks to the concern of several successive resident swamis. Dedicatory *kumbhābhiṣéka*-s (anointing of the temple dome) have been held in 1941 and 1972, commemorating the completion of significant modern features.[5]

Three sets of priests are employed by the temple, two sets of whom conduct the *yāga*. The priests who do not participate in the *yāga*, but who have full responsibility for ritual at the central shrine (*garbha gṛha*) of the temple are, surprisingly, not Śaiva priests at all, but Madhva Vaiṣṇava priests known as *poṭṛ*-s; they are Tulus from Mangalore steeped in the Tantric tradition. The ancestors of these priests were first brought to Tiruccenṭur several centuries ago—either by Dalavai Ramappayyan, the prime minister of Tirumalai Nayak (1623-1659) or by Maharajah Marthanda Varma (1729-

1758).[6] One of the characteristic features of these Vaiṣṇava priests is their custom of passing out to pilgrims *vibhuti* or sacred ash wrapped in leaves, a custom said to dramatize the priests' aloofness.[7] The other priests, who are Śaiva, and who officiate at the *yāga* are of two types. The leader of the *yāga* and his family of priests are Mukhāṇiar brahmins, also Tulus from Mangalore known as Śivatantra Śaivas. At least two families of these were brought to Tiruccenṭur from Mangalore over a generation ago, perhaps in response to the incorporation of Vaiṣṇava priests from Mangalore into the temple ritual earlier. Especially schooled in aspects of Tantric ritual as recorded in the *Karaṇāgama*, these families of priests are highly skilled and articulate ritual technicians. Indeed, few other Śaiva priests in South India are as sensitive to the symbolic and aesthetic features of ritual as they. The third type of priests, known as Śivācāryas or Aṭiśaivas, serve as *gurukkals* or ritual technicians who assist in a secondary way in the *yāga* and are responsible for the daily and routine rituals in the subsidiary shrines of the temple. These priests, though brahmin, represent an hybridization of Āryan and Dravidian cultural and racial elements. They tend to be more simple in their approach to ritual and more expressive of the folkways of common worshippers.

The Intent of the Ritual

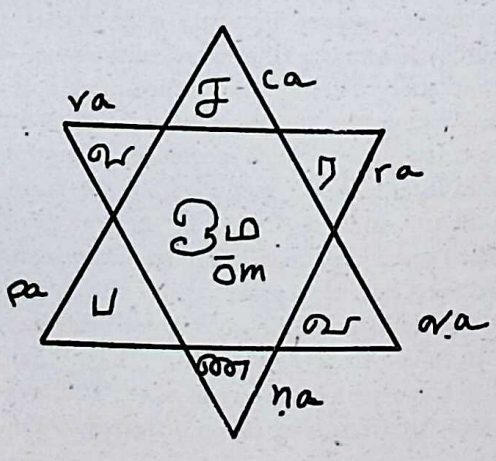
The purpose of the *yāga* ritual is basically two-fold: first, it ritually brings Subrahmaṇya into existence in this place and brings the fullness of Divine power into the god's local representation; secondly, the force of cosmic and personal misfortune—and especially of illness—are ritually overcome by the priests in the name of Subrahmaṇya. These two purposes are related as Subrahmaṇya is considered the deity par excellence for conquering the forces of evil.

This two-fold intent is expressed in the basic mantra of the ritual and in the myth to which the mantra alludes. *Ōm śaravaṇa bhava*, the mantra which recurs in the ritual like a fugue, can be translated: "Hail Self-existent One, who emerged in the *śara*" (grass). The reference is to a basic form of the myth by which Skanda is reported to be born. In the *Mahābhārata Vana Parva*, Chapters 223-232 Skanda is said to have been born on this wise: The *deva*-s, threatened by annihilation at the hands of demonic forces, come to Indra and

Brahmā for help. Indra determines that Agni or Soma could generate a son fit to do the job, so goes to the abode of the *ṛṣi*-s to see what could be arranged. On the new moon day, when sun and moon are conjoined, Agni, god of fire and sun, is present even as *ṛṣi*-s are making the sacrifice. He becomes infatuated with the *ṛṣi*-s' wives who do not reciprocate the feeling. However Svāhā, whose name is associated with Soma, a term which means both moon and the juice poured as libation into the sacrificial fire, is enamored of Agni and tricks him into meeting with her privately. She impersonates six of the *ṛṣi*-s' wives in turn. After each session of love play she assumes the form of a *garuḍa* bird and carries Agni's semen (*retas*) to Mt. Sveta where she puts it into a golden pot at a place overgrown with *śara* reeds. In this spot Subrahmaṇya is born with six faces. Later variations of the myth add that the seed is golden and everything it touches turns to gold. Within six days Skanda has grown to manhood. On Ṣaṣṭi, the sixth day of the moon's waxing, given the weaponry of all the gods, he subdues the troublesome *asura*-s.

Subrahmaṇya is born of the sacrifice. He is the sacrifice. Each performance of the sacrifice and ritual rebirth of Skanda reenacts the primordial sacrifice of Prajāpati; it brings together the cosmogonic powers of fire and soma libation, of sun and moon; it recreates the world. The power of the sacrifice to dispel darkness and chaos is transferred to the person of Skanda.

The phrase *Ōm śaravaṇa bhava* bespeaks this mythic event. Not only is the phrase recited throughout the ritual; it also is geometrically expressed in the structure of the ritual space. A Tamil tantric formula expresses the phrase in terms of a six-pronged star:



The star represents the six faced god; further, the room in which the ritual is performed is arranged in groups of six or seven; a six-faced fire pit; seven divine representations in each corner; seven divine representations in the room's center (the god, his two consorts, the four Vedas) etc.

The intent of the ritual is expressed in other ways as well. A long mythic and literary history associates Skanda with healing. In Āyurvedic literature Skanda or Kumāra is depicted as a teacher of Āyurveda, a school of Hindu ritual healing, and rituals of remedy addressed to the god are often described.[8] A ritual of healing, used extensively by at least the second or third century B.C. is described in the *Skanda Yāga*, a text within the *Atharva-veda pariśiṣṭa*-s. Therein Skanda is known as Dhūrta and is described as a rogue who needed propitiation when illness struck. Other myths suggest how Skanda is the presiding deity of the *graha*-s or malevolent spirits and of malevolent goddesses.[9] When Skanda was an infant, the myth relates, Indra, in fearful jealousy, sent *graha*-s to destroy Skanda. But Skanda, assisted by Viśakha (a deity with which Skanda is eventually amalgamated) produced a host of *graha*-s of his own which subdued Indra's *graha*-s and made the latter subservient. Skanda allowed these *graha*-s to take shelter in the bodies of impure or wrong-doing persons. Similarly, a host of malevolent goddesses were said to have assisted Skanda in destroying the *asura*-s. These goddesses search for *asura*-s in new born children or in the fetuses of "impure" women. While the goddess most commonly mentioned in the Epic literature is Revatī, one of the goddesses is Ṣaṣṭhī, the demoness who is especially strong on the sixth day of a child's life.

Even in the Tamil *caṅkam* literature written in the early generations of the Christian era, Murukan was said to dispel *aṇaṅku*, a term which connoted the fear or suffering which often overwhelmed persons. Murukan was also known as the vanquisher of *cūr*, malevolent force of the early Tamil hills who often possessed young damsels. Thus Skanda-Murukan has long been known as one who heals and dispels the forces that cause personal malaise. To this day stories abound at virtually every pilgrimage center of Murukan's about the god's having performed miraculous feats of healing in behalf of his faithful devotees.

And more than personal illness, the malevolent power of the cosmos itself is believed held in check by Skanda-Murukan. The *asura*-s which he conquers are ascribed various nuances of meaning within the cultus. In the early stages of the myth, when Skanda

rose to prominence under the aegis of such dynasties as the Śakas, Kuṣāṇas, and Guptas, the god was, at the least, the proto-type of the warrior and the *asura*-s were in part mythologizations of the enemies of the state. But increasingly the demonic force, usually personified as Sūrapadma in Tamil myth came to represent the innately destructive power of the cosmos itself. Further, spiritual evil, that which retards liberation and spiritual growth, is personified in the *asura*-s which Skanda overcomes. This is especially dramatized when Sūrapadma is said to have two brothers so that Murukaṉ's three enemies become the three *mala*-s or evil bonds of the spirit conceptualized in philosophical Śaivism: *āṇava* (ego-consciousness); *karma*; and *māyā*. Sometimes there are said to be six enemies—the three *mala*-s and the three *guṇa*-s: *sattva* (reality), *rajas* (passion or attachment) and *tamas* (inertia or torpor).

So the fire ritual intends to bring Subrahmaṇya into a particular place in the fullness of his power that cosmic and personal malaise may be dispelled. To this basic end, the priests repeat the ritual twice every day for six days, year after year. And it is to this end that particular devotees help fund the ritual that its special beneficence may accrue in their behalf.[10]

The Room

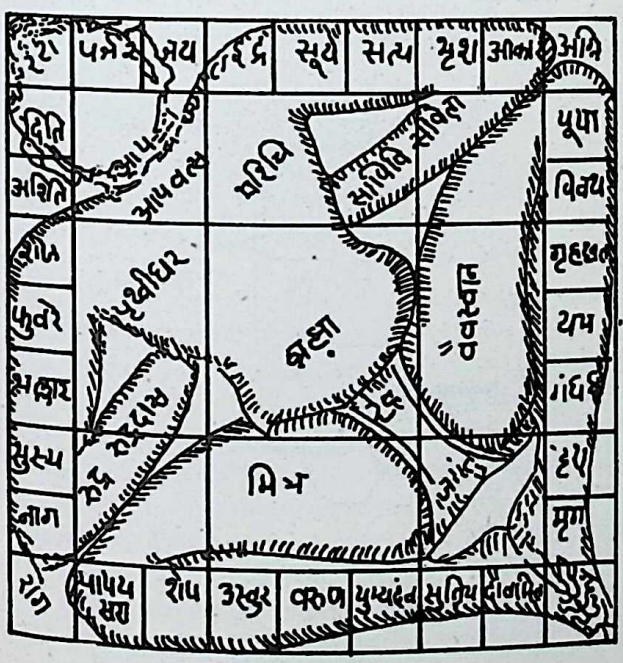
The room in which the ritual is performed—the *yākacālai* (Skt.: *yādaśāla*)—was recently constructed deep in the inner *prakāram* or walkway of the temple. However, the symbolism and basic plan of the room have been a part of Śaiva Tantric lore for at least eight centuries as most of the instructions for its layout were recorded in the Kamikāgamas. In fact, a few features of the sacrificial room are consistent with some of those that were in use for the Vedic sacrifices. The construction of the room dramatizes in symbolic form certain basic principles that enhance the intention of the ritual. These basic principles include the following:

1. The room is a cosmos. This important feature of ritual space is expressed in a variety of ways. The divine representations are placed in such a way that they reside in the appropriate cosmic region; the room's east thereby becomes the east of the cosmos and so on. Further, the room is constructed on three levels (and according to some commentators five) in a manner consistent with Vedic

and Purāṇic cosmologies. The floor of the room, where priests and participants sit, becomes the earth; "half walls" on the outer reaches of the room become the atmosphere on which the "atmospheric" deities are placed. The higher square altar in the middle of the room where representations of Subrahmaṇya and his consorts reside becomes a symbolic heaven. Two other levels are implicitly evident. The upper portion of the fire pit serves as a level between earth and atmosphere. And in the back or west side, on the highest point in the room, the main icons of Subrahmaṇya and his consorts—those to be used in the ongoing festival proceedings—are placed, though only for the morning sacrifice. It is as though this point served as Mt. Meru where the gods remain virtually removed from the ritual proceedings. It is on the three levels, however,—"earth", "atmosphere", and "heaven",—where almost all the ritual occurs.

2. The cosmicized room is equivalent to a cosmicized man. In the Tantric traditions a principle known as the *vāstu-puruṣa maṇḍala* is operative. Therein portions of the body become equated to portions of a temple or ritual room. A common expression of this principle within Śaivism is the notion that the six or seven *cakra*-s

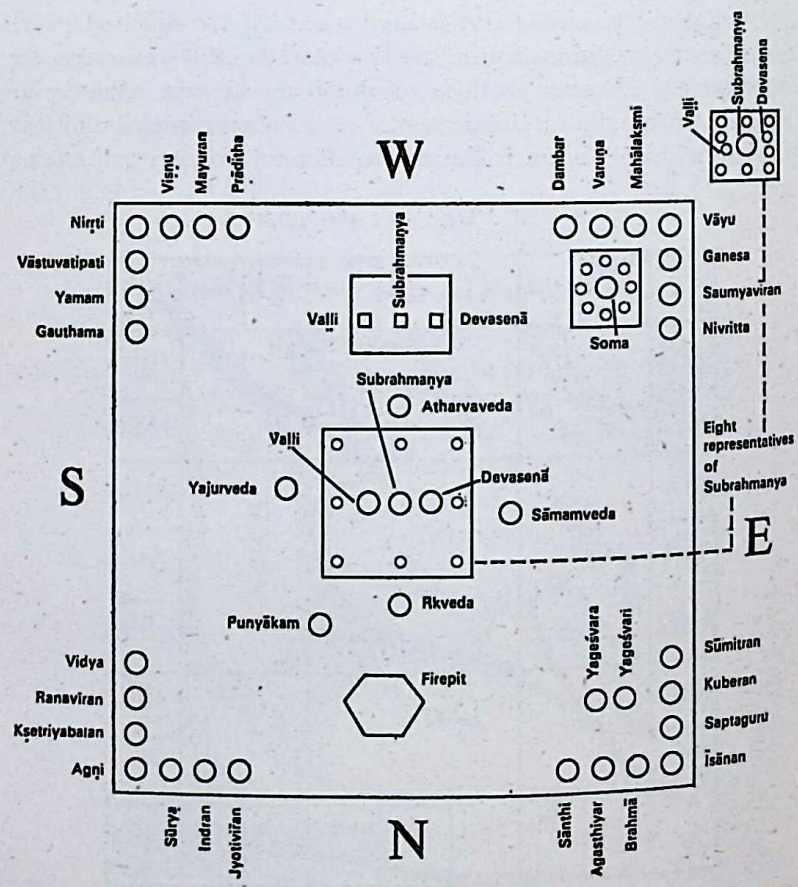
VĀSTU-PURUSA MANDALA



of the body are congruent to six or seven crucial points in the temple where ritual often occurs. A more complex pattern is evident in sacrificial rituals. One example of this type is expressed in the above diagram used in some medieval Tantric sacrifices.[11]

In the *yākacālai* in Tiruccenṭur a similar schematization is utilized. Some thirty-one deities ring the atmosphere and are considered homologous to thirty-one points on the limbs of the body. Seven additional points within the room are homologized to seven *cakra*-s. Of the thirty-one "outer" deities, twenty-eight line the sides in groups of seven gathered at each corner of the cosmos. The number seven thereby recurs as still another cosmic symbol, reordering the room equivalent not only to the human frame but to the god.

The room then is set up for ritual in this manner:



The deities arranged in the room are propitiated at appropriate times during the ritual. Most of the deities are arranged in groups and have specific functions or regions of the cosmos over which they must preside. There are, for example, four sacred "arts" or forms of learning. These are Sānthi or grammar, situated in the East; Vidya or knowledge in the South; Prādhītha, the art of being well-read in the Vedas, located in the West, and Nivṛtta or abstention in the North. In addition, there are eight protectors of the cosmic regions: Indra (E), Yama (S), Varuṇa (W), Kubera (N), Agni (SE), Nirṛtti (SW), Vāyu (NW) and Īsāna (NE). Of these all but two were understood to be cosmic protectors from at least Epic times. In most Epic allusions to the cosmic protectors, however, Sūrya, the sun, is said to have governed the Southwest rather than Nirṛtti, the god of death, while Soma or moon, rather than Īsāna is said to have governed the Northeast.[12] Both Sūrya and Soma still appear in the room though Sūrya is now in the Southeast.

The number eight is expressed often in the groupings of the deities in the room. In addition to the eight protectors, for example, there are eight gatemen. These are: Jyothivīran (E), Raṇavīran (S), Gauthama (S), Mayūran (W), Dambar (W), Saumyavīran (N), Sūmitran (N) and Agasthiyar (E). Further, at two places, eight different manifestations of Subrahmaṇya are depicted: once on the central altar itself and again on a stone tablet on the northern edges of the room. These names of Subrahmaṇya are Kārttikeya (son of the Kṛttikās), Kumāran (son), Senāpati (lord of the army), Bālan (young one), Bhūtapati (lord of beings), Guha (concealed one), Śikkivāhanan (he of the peacock mount), Gajārudan (he with the elephant). These names of the god are invoked regularly throughout the ritual.

The number eight is also evident in the vessels surrounding *soma*, the moon, in the northwest corner of the room. Eight vessels filled with earth taken from a temple to Gaṇeśa (among other things, the lord of the earth) have been implanted with the seeds of the *soma* plant. The *soma* seeds germinate throughout the week's rituals and are finally offered at the main icon of the god at the end of the week.

It is apparent that this ritual room, while it differs in many respects from the Vedic sacrificial hut, nonetheless preserves some of the symbolism of Vedic ritual. Among the most obvious Vedic themes is the recurrent symbolism of a three-layered or five-layered room expressing a triadic or pentadic cosmos, while the orientation

of the four directions expresses a tetradic cosmos. Also operative is the Vedic technique of adding one to a number which has understood cosmic significance, so that the new number expresses completion, perfection, indivisibility.[13] Such is the case with the numbers six and eight. Further, the fire is said to have nine names, one of which is the name Āhavanīyāgni, given to the main fire of most corporate (Śrauta) rituals of Vedic times wherein most oblations were offered. Of course, fire itself persists from Vedic ritual as the "mouth" of the gods, the demiurge formed of two symbolic sticks (*araṇi*-s), the *hiraṇyagarbha* or golden seed, arising as the first created entity from the primordial ocean, and so on.[14] The presence of Soma in the *yāga* room both as moon and as the germinating seeds of the *soma* plant similarly alludes to Vedic symbolism in which the conjoining of *soma* plant and fire—of moon and sun—has cosmogonic and immortalizing overtones. Such Vedic themes as these, however, have been supplemented and modified by the accretions of Tantric and Āgamic formulations: the numerology of six and eight which are discussed in pre-Medieval and Medieval literature;[15] the congruence of man, room, cosmos, and deity; and others. Most obvious of the Tantric themes are the rituals performed by the seated priests for their own bodies, the details for which are prescribed in the Karaṇāgamas. More general rules governing ritual observance within the cult of Subrahmaṇya—rules, for example, determining when a festival or ritual should be held—are recorded in the Kumāra Tantra, a manual available in Grantha script to most Śaiva priests in the South by about the eleventh century.

The Ritual Sequence

The ritual itself proceeds in four stages. The first stage is designed to assure the success of the ritual and includes such specific acts as the worship of Gaṇeśa and invocation of the fire. The next two stages are now done simultaneously, though in the past they were done consecutively.[16] One set of rituals serves to sacralize the bodies of the officiating priests—that is to purify them and invoke the presence of the divine within. The other set of rituals serves to sacralize the room—to purify it and invoke the presence of appropriate divinities. Simultaneously, the bodies of the priests and the room are cosmicized and channels opened for transcending the limits of time and space.

The final stage is the fire sacrifice itself. With accompaniment of drums some one hundred and one items are offered to the gods by way of the fire. These are almost invariably items that are believed to be useful or medicinal in character—items, that is, which man finds beneficial for his own use—twigs and grasses, several forms of wood, seeds, grains, spices, fruits, liquids, cooked foods and pastries. Generally speaking, the sequence of libations for the fire itself suggests a creative process; the sequence, for example, is from seeds to ripened foods, from raw to cooked foods. In fact, the sequence of offerings is generally consistent with the stages of cosmogony around which considerable Upaniṣadic speculation centered: "heat" is followed by "liquid" which is followed, in turn, by "food".[17] The accompaniment of sound (*oli*), the numinous beat of the drum, enhances the creative intent of the sacrifice, for sound has consistently had cosmogonic connotations in Hindu speculation. With all else the sacrifice—and in fact, the entire ritual—means, it serves to symbolically create a new world.

The sequence of libations comes to a climax when a packet of cocoanut, betelnut, fruit, gold and silver, all wrapped in red silk, is offered into the fire. This act, replacing the older animal sacrifices, becomes a symbolic seal of the participants' offering of themselves to the gods.

More specifically, the ritual acts, in sequence, are as follows:

1. *Saṅkalpa*—Literally, a declaration of intent to undergo penance, this ritual act serves as a commitment on the part of priests and chief participants to engage themselves in fire sacrifice. Traditionally performed on the new moon day, *saṅkalpa* required that priests engage in ritual tonsure, bathing, fasting, celibacy and certain other vows of omission and commission preparatory to the ritual'.[18] Today *saṅkalpa* connotes an agreement between the priests and contractor that the ritual be performed and a willingness on the part of priests to live a life of abstinence for the duration of the ritual.

2. *Vināyaka pūjā*—The worship of Gaṇeśa. As with all ritual and other important undertakings, Gaṇeśa, who assures the success of such enterprises, is invoked.

3. *Puṇyāhavācanam*—This is the recitation of invocatory stanzas addressed to the sacrifice, as represented by a surrogate vessel situated near the northeast corner of the main altar. The recitation of mantras is accompanied by the scattering of rose petals, sacred water and *vilvam* leaves on to the vessel. Of the intent of this ritual,

the priests suggest it is to "purify the place by means of *sūtram*" (sacred stanzas) as compared with the purification done by *stulam* or sweeping. That is, the *puṇyahavācanam*" cleanses internally rather than externally.

4. *Pañcagavya*—This ritual, dating from the Vedic period, is a form of penance which entails offering to the fire (or alternatively to the surrogate fire vessel) five products of the cow—milk, curd, ghee or melted butter, urine, and dung. Traditionally, the ritual served as the final act in the *saṅkalpam* or preparatory penance. In older usage the leftover *pañcagavya* was to be drunk; today it is sipped and sprinkled throughout the room. This act concludes the first and preparatory stage of the ritual sequence.[19]

5. *Sūryakumbha pūjā*—Oblations offered to the vessel representing the sun initiates the next stage of the ritual, during which the room is sacralized and all the deities arranged therein are propitiated. Worship at each vessel includes the uttering of appropriate mantras, the sprinkling of flowers (*puṣpa*) and, later, the showing of camphor lights.

6. *Somakumbha pūjā*—Oblations to the moon vessel. This *pūjā* is said to assist the growth of the seedlings of the *soma* plant germinating in the eight smaller earthen pots surrounding the *soma* pot.

7. *Vedakumbha pūjā*—Oblations to the four vessels representing the Vedas. These are placed in each of the four directions around the central altar.

8. *Dwārapālaka pūjā*—Oblations for the protectors of the four gates: Jyotivīran (E), Gauthama (S), Dambar (W), Sūmitran (N).

9. *Vāstuvatipati kumbha pūjā*—*Pūjā* to the vessel representing the lord of the house (*vāstu pati*).

10. *Nityavārana pūjā*—An obligatory (*nitya*) *pūjā* intended to eternally ward off malaise; mantras are addressed in a southerly direction. This ritual represents the first of those designed to purify the body. This and the following several acts are occurring concurrently with those designed to sacralize the room. This ritual includes *prāṇāyama*[20] (the restraint of breath), an exercise designed to effect internal cleansing. Also related to this ritual is *bhūtaśakti*, an exercise which the priests say enables them to "become one with the deity".

11. *Āntarabhajanam*—"Interior prayer" includes the recitation of stanzas of praise from the Karaṇāgamas intended to purify and consecrate the inner man.

12. *Nyāsātikal*—There follows a series of *nyāsas*. A *nyāsa* is "mentally invoking a god or gods, mantras and holy texts to come to occupy certain parts of the body in order to render the body as pure and fit receptacle for worship and meditation".[21] The term is derived from the root *as* (to cast) with *ni* and thus means literally "placing or depositing in or on".[22] This is a ritual technique specifically associated with Tantrism and is not generally to be found in ritual texts prior to the twelfth century. In the present ritual there are thirty-eight places on the body where the sacred is invoked. (Note the homology with thirty-eight deities in the room). By means of these invocations, malevolent influences are cast out of the body and the body cosmicized, sacralized, and rendered congruent to the ritual room.

13. *Jaṅgha bhaṅga nyāsa* mantra.

14. *Munda bhaṅga nyāsa* mantra.

15. *Vaktra bhaṅga nyāsa* mantra.

16. *Hala bhaṅga nyāsa* mantra.

These mantras are intended especially to "break" (*bhaṅga*) malevolevnt forces in specific parts of the body: the calf (*jaṅgha*); the head (*munda*) and the mouth (*vaktra*).

17. *Antaramātṛkā*—In this form of *nyāsa* several letters of the alphabet (*a* to *kṣa*) are assigned to parts of the body, specifically to the fingers, palms and backs of the hands; the throat, the generative organ; the middle of the brow and other of the six *cakra*-s. The letters not only are ascribed a numinous and cosmogonic character of their own, but can be identified with the colors of certain flowers and with certain deities.[23]

18. *Śivakastam*—With this act, the sequence returns again to the consecration of the room. This act, usually done prior to the actual ritual sequence itself, has to do with the determination of an auspicious space for the ritual. It is designed to make certain that the room itself totally befits the symbolic canons of the *Kamikāgamas*.

19. *Viṣeṣarthapūjā*—These are miscellaneous rituals of a specific nature intended to make it possible to proceed to the next stages of ritual.

20. *Sthalastuti*—Prayers of praise for the place and its symbolic significance are uttered.

21. *Ātmapūjā*—*Pūjā* to the *ātman* or self is offered.

22. *Mantrastuti*—These are prayers of praise for the mantras so crucial to the sacralizing process.

23. *Dikpāla kumbha pūjā*—Oblations follow to the vessels of the guardians of the four quarters: Agasthiyar (NE), Raṇavīran (SE), Mayūran (SW), Saumyavīran (NW).

24. *Yāgeśvara* and *yāgeśvari kumbha pūjā*—These are oblations to the vessel of the god and goddess of the fire.

25. *Gaṇapati kumbha pūjā*—*Pūjā* is offered to the vessel of Gaṇeśa.

26. *Lakṣmi kumbha pūjā*—Offerings are made to the vessel of Lakṣmi.

27. *Sapta guru kumbha pūjā*—*Pūjā* is addressed to the vessels of the seven gurus. These "gurus" are apparently the seven *ṛṣi*-s who officiated at the sacrifice at which Skanda was conceived.

28. *Vedika pūjā*—Oblations are made to the fire altar.

29. *Prabhana kumbha pūjā*—Oblations are made to the lights, apparently the sun and moon, worshipped earlier.

30. *Vartani kumbha pūjā*—Oblations are made to the vessels of the sacred "pathways" or arts: Sānthi (grammar); Vidya (knowledge); Prādītha (being well-versed in the Vedas); Nivṛtta (abstention).

31. *Avārakapūjā*—Oblations are made to the vessels of the protectors of the cosmos: Indra, Yama, Varuṇa, Kubéra, Agni, Nirṛti, Vāyu, Īsāna.

32. *Agnikārya*—Finally, the fire ritual itself is held. It is at this point that drumming starts, the fire is mounted in earnest, and the libations are poured into the fire, one after the other. A list of the libations is appended to this description. With the conclusion of this act the ritual is ended.

LIST OF OFFERINGS FOR THE FIRE

TWIGS

1. aracu—*Ficus Religiosa*
2. puracu—*butea frondosa*
3. aṟi—margosa shrub
4. āl—banyan twigs
5. vaḷḷi—creeper
6. nāyuṟuvi—a kind of plant: *achyranthes aspera*
7. vilvamaram—vilva tree
8. aṟuku—a kind of grass

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9. cantaṉakkaṭṭai—sandalwood

10. akil—akil
11. tēvacuvāṟu—a pine
12. ceñcantaṉakkaṭṭai—red sandalwood
13. karuṅkālikaṭṭai—ebony

WOOD

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14. kōtumai—wheat
15. veṇkaṭuka—white mustard seed
16. tuvarai—dhall
17. payiru—split peas
18. katasa—boiled Bengal gram
19. veṇmoccai—white beans
20. eḷḷu—gingelly seeds
21. uḷuntu—black gram
22. koḷḷu—horse gram

GRAINS, LENTILS

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23. paccaimañcaḷ—green turmeric
24. muṭṭālmañcaḷ—bathing turmeric
25. viraimañcaḷ—cooking turmeric
26. kastūrimañcaḷ—aromatic turmeric
27. veṟṟivēr—an odorless cuscus root
28. vilāmiccavēr—a sweet-scented cuscus root
29. cukku—dry ginger
30. miḷaku—pepper
31. tippili—long pepper
32. kaṭukkāy—gallnut or ink nut
33. nellikkāy—gooseberry
34. tāṉṟikkāy—a medicinal fruit
35. kuṅkiliyam—eucalyptus
36. cantaṉam—sandal paste
37. mūṅkilaṟaci—rice freed from husk
38. kāṭṭukōtumai—jungle wheat

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39. kōspam—an aquatic plant
40. pūlāṅkiḻaṅku—a bulb

41. tāmaraikiḻaṅku—a lotus bulb
42. taṇṇīrvaṭṭaṉkiḻaṅku—a water tuber
43. pullarici—a rice grown of grass
44. tāḷi—a medicinal herb
45. upaṟiri—
46. iñci—ginger green
47. paccilai—leaves
48. kaṭāmañci—musk

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49. aval—dried rice
50. nelpoṟi—parched paddy
51. poṟikaṭalai—boiled Bengal gram
52. carkkarai—brown sugar
53. pēriccampaḻam—dates
54. kaṟkkaṇṭu—sugar candy
55. muntiripaḻam—raisins
56. muntiripaṟuppu—cashew nuts
57. kismis—raisins
58. ēlam—cardamom
59. kirāmpu—cloves
60. jātikkāy—nutmeg
61. jātippattiri—mace
62. pappaṭappul—a medicinal herb
63. paccaikaṟpūram—a green herb
64. kuṅkumampū—saffron
65. kōrējaṉai—bezoar
66. kasturi—a saffron powder

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67. katalippaḻam—a kind of banana
68. nāṭṭuppaḻam—a wild plaintain
69. malaippaḻam—a hill plaintain
70. ārañcuppaḻam—orange FRUITS
71. māmpaḻam—mango
72. koṭimuntiruppaḻam—grapes
73. elimiccampaḻam—lime

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74. pāl—milk

75. tayir—curd
76. veṇṇai—butter
77. tēn—honey
78. iḷanīr—tender cocoanut milk
79. viputi—ash of cow dung
80. cantaṉam—sandal paste
81. paṇṇīr—rose water
82. puṣpam—flowers

RITUAL ELEMENTS

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83. carkkarai poṅkal—sugared boiled rice
84. ciṟupayaṟṟuṉṉam—green dhall boiled rice
85. cāmpāraṉṉam—sambar rice
86. elimiccampaḻam annam—lime rice
87. eḷḷaṇṇam—gingelly seed rice
88. Tayir aṉṉam—curd rice

RICE PREPARATIONS

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89. vaṭai—*vaṭai*, a cake made of rice and black gram
90. appam—a bread
91. atiracam—a pastry made of rice flour and brown sugar
92. tēṅkuḻal—a pastry
93. eḷḷaṭai—a pappadam made with gingelly seed

PASTRIES

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94. veṟṟilaipākku—betelnut
95. tēṅkāy—cocoanut
96. paḻam—fruit
97. cuvarṇam—gold
98. veḷḷi—silver
99. paṭṭu—silk

PACKAGE

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100. ney—ghee (offered with each item), accompanied by: oli—sound

Notes

1. This article, though previously unpublished, was originally prepared to accompany a film of the same title. Readers who wish to visualize the ritual described here may procure the film by contacting the author at: Dept. of Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa. U.S.A. 15206.
2. In a myth recorded in the *Mahābhārata* (III : 223), the god Skanda (who becomes associated with Subrahmaṇya/Murukaṉ) is born on *amavāsyā*, the new moon, when the sun and moon are conjoined.
3. For a more extensive discussion of the symbolic significance of Skanda-Ṣaṣṭhī, *see* my "Skanda-Ṣaṣṭhī : A Festival in Tamil India" in *History of Religions*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (February 1969), pp. 236-259.
4. J.M. Somasundaram Pillai, *Tiruccenṭur: The Seashore Temple of Subramanya* (Madras: Addison Press, 1948), p. 17.
5. For more complete description of the Tiruccenṭur Temple, *see* J.M. Somasundaram's book (*op. cit.*) or my *The Many Faces of Murukaṉ: The History and Meaning of a South Indian God* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1978).
6. J.M. Somasundaram Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
8. P.K. Agrawala, "Skanda in the Purāns", *Purāṇa* VIII, 1 (January 1966) p. 149.
9. See *Mahābhārata* III, 223-232 and *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* II : 22 : 88.
10. The patron and benefactor of the ritual depicted in the film: "*Yāga: A Fire Ritual in South India*" is a wealthy film producer who was troubled by an allergy to perspiration. In addition to funding the rituals in their entirety, he donated 400,000 rupees to the temple.
11. The diagram on page 135 is reproduced from Andreas Volwahsen's *Living Architecture: India* of the *Living Architecture* series, Edited by Henri Stierlin, (New York, N.Y.: Grosset and Dunlap, 1969), p. 44. Volwahsen does not specify from which text the diagram is taken.
12. E. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*. (New York : Biblo and Tannen 1969), pp. 149ff.
13. See, for example, an unpublished paper by David M. Knipe, "One Fire, Three Fires, Five Fires: Vedic Symbols in Transition" (Presented at the American Academy of Religion; New York, NY, 1971).
14. The other eight names ascribed the fire of this *yāga* under discussion are: Śivagni, Lakṣinagni, Gaṅgapatyagni, Balāgni, Yāvanamagni, Bṛhadagni, Kēvalāgni, Samanāgni.
15. For discussion of the symbolism in six, see my *The Many Faces of Murukaṉ: The History and Meaning of a South Indian God*. The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1978.
16. This telescoping of the ritual into simultaneous acts is one of the few concessions in the entire ritual to "modernity".
17. See Chandogya Upaniṣad VI among other passages.
18. See P.V. Kane, *History of the Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. IV, pp. 119ff for additional information on the *saṅkalpa*.
19. See P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 773-774 and IV, p. 141 for further description of the *pañcagavya*. Kane cites allusions to the *pañcagavya* in RV. I. 22.17; I. 114.8; VII. 99.3; X. 1, 4; and elsewhere.

20. For further description of *prāṇāyama*, *see* P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, II, 317 and IV, 42.
21. P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, V, p. 1122.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 1123.
23. P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 1120 cites such texts as the Smṛtimuktāphala (Āhnika, pp. 329-331) and the Kālikāpurāṇa (chapter 77) where the mystical meaning of letters is discussed, especially when the letters are said to be the twenty-four letters of the *Gāyatri* (Ṛg III. 62.10).

PART III

ŚAIVISM IN PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

THE third set of essays examines Śaivism "in process". Their concern is to explore how Śaiva commentators interpret their tradition selectively and adapt it to "new" circumstances. Each essay speaks in its own way of an historical process whereby some part of culture is "Śaivized" or aspects of Śaivism are made compatible to current exigencies. We see first how the famed philosopher Śaṅkara is incorporated into the Śaiva mythological mainstream. We then see how a popular but controversial contemporary Śaiva preacher interprets the tradition in such a way that it provides a basis for radical social change and egalitarian reform. Finally, we note how Śaivism was to influence the historical and religious structure of Thai Buddhism.

David Lorenzen examines the hagiography of Śaṅkara to show how Śaiva "biographers" or myth-making hagiographers have laid claim to the great philosopher as a Śaivite. At least two important devices are used: first, Śaṅkara is regarded as an incarnation of Śiva; and second, Vaiṣṇava themes are ascribed to Śaṅkara's early life in such a way as to Śaivize those themes or, more particularly, to depict Vaiṣṇava attributes as "inferior" to Śaiva ones.

There are several dimensions to this process. Not the least is the use of myth to explain Śiva's incarnation as Śaṅkara. Śiva is said to be incarnated to "establish the path of Śruti" for the purpose of refuting Buddhism and such Hindu "heretics" as the Kāpālikas. The birth narrative associated with Śaṅkara is quite consistent both with the general saga of the birth of heroes as first outlined by Otto Rank in 1914 and also with the accounts of Kṛṣṇa's birth.

Śaṅkara as the *avatāra* of Śiva (itself a Vaiṣṇava theme) is said to defeat various theological and sectarian opponents, most of them non-Vaiṣṇava. Śaivism's "superiority" is conveyed rather in more subtle ways. For example, the ideal life-style of Śaivism is associated with that of the ascetic (*Saṃnyāśrama-dharma*) while the ideal of Vaiṣṇavism is identified with that of the householder (*grhasthāśrama-dharma*). It is the latter—the "Vaiṣṇava" way—which Śaṅkara rejects.

Other Śaiva motifs interspersed with Vaiṣṇava ones are woven

into the accounts of Śaṅkara's life. Those forms of Śaiva devotionalism deemed incompatible with Śaṅkara's doctrine are ascribed to Śaṅkara even though many of Śaṅkara's opponents are, in fact, Śaivite. Lorenzen further suggests that the symbolism of water/river similarly combines Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava motifs as Śaṅkara confronts the river in the manner of Śiva even though water imagery is more commonly associated with Viṣṇu.

Lorenzen concludes that Vaiṣṇava themes were woven into the mythology surrounding Śaṅkara in order to elevate Śaṅkara to a level of popularity equal to Kṛṣṇa and to "prove" the superiority of Śiva over Viṣṇu.

Charles Ryerson brings us to a contemporary setting in Tamil India. Using Robert Bellah's discussion of modernity as "romantic nationalist" and "radical socialist", he suggests that a similar process is operative in Tamil India and that Śaivism is being adapted in just such a process. One *cuvāmi* in particular, the colorful Kuṉrakkuṭi Aṭikaḷ, illustrates how Śaivism is being re-adapted with the selective use of Marxist ideals in such a way that the tradition is not only re-interpreted in contemporary idiom but even becomes a legitimation for social change. One classical Tamil Śaiva poet, Appar, especially becomes Kuṉrakkuṭi Aṭikaḷ's "hero" and is interpreted as having spoken for social change and egalitarianism centuries ago. Kuṉrakkuṭi speaks of social change not as something which needs to be borrowed from the "West", but as something which is basic to the best instincts of traditional Śaivism. The contemporary spokesman invokes the "primordial identities"—to use Bellah's term—of religion, language and ethnic origin to serve as a model for an ideal social order today. Kuṉrakkuṭi Aṭikaḷ seeks thereby to make Śaivism an eloquent medium to address the needs and regional aspirations of contemporary Tamil India.

Donald Swearer, in his essay, explores the impact Śaivism has made in the history and practice of religion in Thailand. The essay traces the history of Śaivism's presence in Thailand and summarizes some aspects of its role in the ritual life of Thai Buddhism. Swearer notes that Śaiva influence can be traced to the first century of the Christian era and grows with the rise of the Śrivijaya kingdom in the eighth century when it begins to especially influence Thai notions of kingship. Iconography and temples to Śiva appear between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries; in the same period Śaiva cosmology was informing Thai temple architecture and Śaiva

theology was being assimilated into Thai Buddhist iconography. By the thirteenth century an influential community of Śaiva "brahman" priests lived in Thailand, some of them participating in rites surrounding the royal court.

Isolating Śaiva elements in Thai religious practice is more difficult as a rather vague electicism of Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Buddhist, and folk elements occurred over the centuries. Yet certain specifically Śaiva elements can be discerned in Thai ritual life. For example, some Buddhist rituals include an invocation to Śiva. Similarly, the Festival of the Swing, a State ceremony of ancient times, celebrated the visit of Śiva to earth for ten days during the first lunar month. There were also Śaiva influences on the conception and symbolization of the Thai monarchy: the Thai kingdom became a cosmos; a pyramid-shaped temple represented Mt. Meru; the king was homologous to the deity. Further, in the ritual coronation of the King, Śiva and other deities were merged in the personal monarch. In another royal ritual—that of tonsure—the prince "becomes" Gaṇeśa; the ceremony is said to occur on Mt. Kailasa, and re-enacts the tonsure of Gaṇeśa, while his father the king is equated to Śiva.

In general, Śaiva and other Hindu components perform roles in ritual that Buddhist components could not do but in such a way as to make the Hindu elements subordinate and compatible to Buddhist ideology. In a similar way brāhman priests and Buddhist bhikkhus interact in ceremonies like funerals and ordinations. Moreover, many traditional state ceremonies call for the leadership of the brāhman priest who invariably had to be initiated as a Buddhist monk.

These essays illustrate in specific contexts a process of historical change. It is a process that the Śaiva tradition shares, in a general way, with other religious traditions of South and Southeast Asia. By adaptation and assimilation each such tradition has shown itself to be no fossil or monolith. So too with Śaivism. It has been like a river, fed by the streams of many sacred hills and washing the banks of many human disciplines and cultures. It is experience in motion. Each successive essay is a "still" snapshot that catches a moment in that movement.

9

THE LIFE OF ŚAṄKARĀCĀRYA

David N. Lorenzen

HAGIOGRAPHY, whether mostly myth or mostly history, stands at the very center of the major world religions. Without the lives of Jesus, Gautama, Mohammad, and Kṛṣṇa and Rāma these religions are virtually inconceivable. Once we divert our attention to more minor figures, however, we find a surprising dearth of scholarly interest in saints and their hagiographies or in hagiology as a general phenomenon. Saints seem to have suffered the same neglect that Victor Turner has recently noted with regard to pilgrimages. Religious leaders and "engaged" scholars have been silenced by their ambivalence or embarrassment and anthropologists by their concentration, until recently, on phenomena of a more local and secular character. Both hagiography and pilgrimage serve as a half-way house or link between Redfield's Little and Great Traditions in which neither group of scholars has felt entirely comfortable.[1]

With regard to India we must exclude from such a concept of hagiography both the lives of the founding fathers of Jainism and Buddhism and of the major incarnations of Viṣṇu. Whatever their original character these are now thoroughly integrated within their respective Great Traditions. The hagiographies we refer to are primarily those of historical figures such as Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Kabīr, and Caitanya who were founders of sectarian movements or in some way important religious innovators. These texts seem to reflect a response to the needs and demands of popular religious taste as well as efforts from above to disseminate on a popular level a more learned tradition.

What scholarly interest has been expressed in these hagiographies has come mostly from historians and students of mythology. In general the former have limited their enquiry to extracting the "historical" aspects of the texts. In most cases this approach reduces an extensive literature to a short paragraph or two. Students of mythology for their part have mostly preferred to work with literature less tainted by historical reality.

The quest for the historical Śaṅkarācārya will not carry us very

far. Even his dates are uncertain though scholars until recently have accepted as most probable the years 788-820 A.D.[2] The facts we can accept with confidence are that he was born in a Brāhman family from the Kerala region but left home at an early age to become a wandering ascetic (*saṃnyāsin*); that he became a student of a teacher named Govinda, a pupil of Gauḍapāda; that he wrote various philosophical and devotional works including commentaries on the Upaniṣads, *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Brahmasūtra*; and that he travelled throughout India with his own disciples defeating rival theologians. It is probable though not at all certain that his father was named Śivaguru and was a Yajurvedin Brāhman of the Taittirīya branch; that his father died while he was still a young child; that he later performed the funeral rites of his widowed mother over the objections of his kinsmen; that one of his most important conquests was a man named Maṇḍana Miśra, a mīmāṃsā follower of Kumārila; that his most important disciples were named Ānandagiri, Padmapāda (Sanandana), Sureśvara (doubtfully identified with Maṇḍana Miśra and Viśvarūpa), Hastāmalaka, and Toṭakācārya; that he established various religious centers especially at Śṛṅgerī in the South, at Purī in the East, Dvārakā in the West, and Badarikāśrama in the North; and that he died at a young age, thirty-two according to most accounts, at either Badarikāśrama, Kāñcī or somewhere in Kerala.

By Indian standards this is quite a lot to know about an author of the period, but considering the extensive hagiography dedicated to Śaṅkara it is pitifully little. To make matters worse we know only the broad outline of the religious, political, economic and social background. Further scholarship may fill some of the gaps but it seems unlikely that a historical study comparable, for instance, to S.G.F. Brandon's on the relation between Jesus and the Zealots will be done for Śaṅkara.

There remain, however, historical problems worthy of further discussion. Hagiography is a nearly universal phenomenon whose existence in any specific context does not require recourse to theories of historical borrowings, even, as we shall see, in the case of remarkably similar life stories of saints and heroes from different cultures. Nonetheless, it is valid to ask what were the factors which led to its appearance within the religions of India and how, once the hagiographical tradition was established, the lives of various saints influenced each other and evolved in the course of time.

In Vedic religion hagiography does not seem to have played any

important role. Neither in the Vedas themselves, the Brāhmaṇas, nor the Upaniṣads is there evidence that the life histories of either human saints or the gods were regarded with special interest. The first important hagiographies for which evidence survives are those of the Buddha, Mahāvīra and Kṛṣṇa. In the former two cases it is probable that the actual historical persons died in the earlier half of the fifth century B.C. How soon afterward their life stories became significant in the religious movements they founded is not certain. In the sculpture of the stupas of Bhārhut and Sānchī dating from about the second or first centuries B.C. appear scenes not only of the life of Gautama, the Buddha but also of his former lives. The sources for these former lives, which were later codified in the *Jātakas*, were popular folktales. The central character was simply identified with the Buddha in a former life and a Buddhist moral added. In this way a large body of hagiographical literature was created almost at a single stroke. In Jainism the lives of the twenty-four *tīrthakara*-s including Mahāvīra occupy an analogous position and probably developed at about the same time.

The earliest Hindu god to be given a real hagiology is apparently Kṛṣṇa. The recent discovery of a new type of drachma of the Indo-Greek king Agathocles (c. 180-165 B.C.) showing on one side the figure of Kṛṣṇa and on the other his brother, the plough carrying Saṅkarṣaṇa, suggest that the hagiology of Kṛṣṇa was already well-developed, at least orally, by about 200 B.C. or earlier.[3] This strengthens the more enthusiastic interpretations of the references found in Pāṇini, Megasthenes, the Besnagar inscription of Heliodoros, and the *Mahābhāsya* of Patañjali.[4]

Evidently, hagiography first became important in India sometime between about 500 and 200 B.C., a period also marked by the most important social, political and religious changes on the subcontinent until the industrial revolution. The old Vedic Aryan tribal social structure decayed, partly as a result of economic changes and partly through contact with non-Vedic peoples, and on its ashes arose new territorial kingdoms with important urban centers, new social institutions, and new religious movements. At their inception the principal new movements—Buddhism, Jainism, Ājīvikism, and Upaniṣadic Hinduism—were basically elitist in character with a message directed at free-thinking Brahmans, aristocrats, and educated merchants. The "heresies", Buddhism in particular, soon gained considerable strength and political support. The result was a

competition for popular support between the heresies, Upaniṣadic Hinduism, and the still important though weakened traditional sacrificial cult, a competition which lasted until the virtual disappearance of Buddhism from India.[5] One of the most important weapons in the struggle, we suggest, was the elaboration of hagiographies which appealed to the emotions of the general populace and also served as a medium through which popular beliefs, gods and heroes could enter the various great traditions.

The relative lack of scholarly interest in the Śaṅkara hagiography is reflected in the lack of published original texts and modern critical studies. The best general secondary work is Baldev Upādhyāy's *Śrī Śaṅkarācārya* in Hindi. Upādhyāy lists some twenty-two Sanskrit hagiographies by various authors.[6] My own search for references to such texts has added another dozen or so titles. Only six or seven of these texts, however, are available in printed form. Most important are the *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* or *Saṅkṣepa-Śaṅkara-jaya* ascribed to Mādhava alias Vidyāraṇya,[7] the *Śaṅkaravijaya* of Ānandagiri alias Ānantānandagiri[8] and the *Śaṅkaravijaya* of Vyāsācala.[9] W.R. Antarkar has recently edited several of the less important texts in the *Journal of the University of Bombay* and has published several important critical articles about the literature in the same journal.[10] Although none of the hagiographies have been fully translated into European languages, several short collated summaries of Śaṅkara's life have been published in English.[11]

Mādhava's text is without doubt the most important of the hagiographies and is considered authoritative by most of Śaṅkara's present day followers. The arguments of Upādhyāy and Antarkar show that the author belongs to about the latter half of the seventeenth or first half of the eighteenth century and is not the same as the famous fourteenth century Vijayanagar *rājaguru* Mādhava Vidyaraṇya with whom he is traditionally identified.[12] It is difficult, in any case, to accept even a later Mādhava as the real author of the text which seems rather a compilation of earlier material from a variety of sources. Although Upādhyāy accepts a later Mādhava as the author he notes that the first twenty-four verses of chapter twelve are taken from the *Śaṅkarābhyudaya* of Rājacūḍāmaṇi.[13] W.R. Antarkar has identified a number of additional verses these two texts have in common as well as a large number of verses from the Mādhava's text which are also found in Vyāsācala's *Śaṅkaravijaya* and Tirumala Dīkṣita's *Śrī-śaṅkarābhyudayamahākāvya*.[14] The alternate title of Mādhava's work,

the *Saṅkṣepa-Śaṅkarajaya* or *Concise Saṅkarjaya*, gives another clue to its composite character. Most importantly, the text is marked by abrupt breaks and transitions in the narrative which coincide with breaks in the style of the verses. Often these breaks also coincide with the beginning or end of a series of verses found in Vyāsācala. One rather curious example occurs in chapter eleven of Mādhava's text where of fifty-nine verses written in the related meters Indravajrā, Upendravajrā and Upajāti, slightly more than half are rhymed. None of these rhymed verses is found in Vyāsācala's text but over a third of the non-rhymed ones are. The most logical conclusion is that Mādhava borrowed these non-rhymed verses from Vyāsācala (or possibly a common source) and the rhymed ones from another, rhymed source. Also significant is the fact that of the several short series of verses written in Drutavilambita meter in this and other chapters of Mādhava's text virtually all are also found in Vyāsācala, while in the case of other meters there are no common verses. Further research in the unpublished hagiographies will presumably reveal more such borrowings.

The remainder of this essay will discuss the life of Śaṅkara as presented in the published texts placing primary emphasis on Mādhava's *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* and paying particular attention to the role played by religious devotion (*bhakti*) and the contrast made between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism.

In his own philosophical works Śaṅkara asserts that the only real path to salvation is the path of wisdom leading to a deep realization of the identity of the individual soul (*ātman*) with the impersonal ground of being (*brahman*) and of the illusory nature of the multiplex physical world. For the ordinary man in the world devotion is a valuable propaedeutic to raise himself to a higher level but cannot in itself produce liberation. A personal god (*īśvara*) does exist, but only as an imperfect perception of *brahman* as equivalent to the physical universe or endowed with its qualities (*saguṇa-brahman*). There is no clear indication in these works of any special preference for either Viṣṇu or Śiva. Most scholars have followed the hagiographies in assuming that Śaṅkara was a Śaivite although Paul Hacker has recently argued, not altogether convincingly, on the basis of Śaṅkara's philosophical works that he was a Vaiṣṇava.[15]

The many devotional hymns attributed to Śaṅkara give a quite different picture.[16] These texts express and advocate impassioned devotion to a variety of specific gods and goddesses. Although

a majority of the more important hymns praise either Śiva or his consort, many hymns are dedicated to other gods including Viṣṇu. A logical conflict between these devotional hymns and the philosophical works is avoided insofar as the former never quite claim that devotion leads directly to salvation, but the contrast between the two remains difficult to reconcile. The best explanation we can offer is to relate the composition of the devotional texts to the previously mentioned competition between Buddhism and Hinduism and to the desire of both to gain popular support. Śaṅkara's metaphysical system, like those of the Buddhists from which it is partly derived, is too complex to provide religious consolation to the common man. The addition or inclusion of devotionalism was evidently undertaken both out of an altruistic concern for the religious needs of the laity and a practical concern for the continued existence of the monastic organization set up to preserve that doctrine.

The hagiographies dedicated to Śaṅkara are basically Śaivite in character. Firstly, Śaṅkara himself is regarded as an incarnation of the god Śiva. Secondly and more interestingly, the story of Śaṅkara's childhood and youth reveals conscious or semi-conscious design by his followers to appropriate and refashion the stories of Kṛṣṇa's boyhood and to associate Vaiṣṇavism with an inferior level of spiritual development. It is necessary to note, however, that this Śaivite devotionalism does not imply acceptance of any and all types of Śaivism. For the authors of the hagiographies as for Śaṅkara himself sectarian movements were judged primarily on their theological and ritual compatibility with Śaṅkara's doctrine and not simply on what god was held in highest esteem. Many of Śaṅkara's most important opponents were in fact Śaivites. Some like the Pāśupatas were objectionable for their philosophical beliefs and others like the Kāpālikas primarily for their rejection of ritual orthodoxy (*varṇāśrama-dharma*).

The motive and process of Śiva's incarnation as Śaṇkara will be best illustrated by a brief summary of the story as presented by Mādhava. The story begins with a relation of the heavenly background of the incarnation:

> In heaven the minor gods came to Śiva to complain that on earth Viṣṇu had entered the body of the Buddha and was leading men astray: "Like the night with darkness, the earth is full of Buddhists who rely on the *āgamas* composed by him. They corrupt (orthodox) doctrine, despise *brahman* and reject the customs of class and

stages of life (*varṇāśrama-dharma*)."

In addition to the Buddhists, who seem to be the gods' chief concern, they also complain against the false doctrines and customs propagated by "heretics devoted to the *āgamas* of Śiva and Viṣṇu," by Kāpālikas who worship Bhairava with offerings of human heads, and other proponents of "thorny paths". They then beg Śiva to incarnate himself on earth and "establish the path of *śruti*". Śiva consents saying: "Becoming incarnate on earth in human form I will fulfil your desire." He then prophesies that as the Brāhman Śaṅkara he will establish true dharma by composing a definitive commentary on the *Brahmasūtra* and spread its message throughout India with the help of four great disciples. Meanwhile other gods were to become incarnate on earth to prepare the path for him. Most importantly, the gods Viṣṇu and Seṣa were to become the *munis* Saṃkarṣaṇa and Patañjali who would establish the *upāsti-yoga-kāṇḍa*, i.e. the path of devotion and Yoga. The *karma-kāṇḍa* or path of Vedic rites would be established by Śiva's own son Skanda as Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and by the god Brahmā as his disciple Maṇḍana Miśra. The establishment of these two paths would prepare men for the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* or path of knowledge of Śaṅkara. The god Indra would become incarnate as a king named Sudhanvan, the future protector of Śaṅkara. Other gods would become incarnate as his future disciples and other worthy Brāhmans.

The second chapter of Mādhava's text transfers the scene to earth:

On the bank of the Pūrṇā River in Kerala, Śiva became manifest in the form of *liṅga*. A certain Rājaśekhara, whom the commentator and other texts identify as the king of the region, built a temple over it. Near this temple in an *agrahāra* named Kālaṭi lived a Brāhman named Vidyādhirāja. He had a son named Sivaguru who was devoted to his Vedic studies and wished to become an ascetic. Vidyādhirāja insisted that his son become a householder first, and Śivaguru was married to Satī, the daughter of another Brāhman named Maghapaṇḍita. The couple lived together happily for many years, but had no male heir. Finally, they offered prayers and fierce penances to the god Śiva in order that he might grant them a son. Eventually Śiva granted them a boon. In a dream the god offered Śivaguru a choice of one omniscient but short-lived son or many long-lived but ordinary sons. Śivaguru chose the former and on that auspicious day the power of Śiva (*śaiva-tejas*) entered Śivaguru's food and "the deer-eyed (Satī) conceived the embryo of Śiva." While pregnant she experienced various auspicious dreams and eventually gave birth, without any pain, to her marvellous son. At his birth many natural wonders occurred. Hostile animals became friends, trees and plants blossomed out of season, rivers turned clear, and

flowers rained down from heaven. Since the child had been born by the grace of Śiva, Śivaguru named him Śaṅkara. Astrologers predicted his future greatness and his body displayed a supernatural lustre and auspicious marks such as those of Śiva's third eye and trident. Thus, when "heaven had become inaccessible and salvation was exceedingly difficult to attain..., Śiva descended on earth in bodily form."

In this story we find much thematic similarity with the classic accounts of the births of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu such as Kṛṣṇa. Much in fact resembles the birth myths of other supernatural heroes from various parts of the ancient world. The psychoanalyst Otto Rank, writing in 1914, compared several myths of the birth of such heroes and extracted a "standard saga" of their life. Regarding the hero's birth and infancy he wrote:

> The hero is the child of most distinguished parents, usually the son of a king. His origin is preceded by difficulties, such as continence, or prolonged barrenness, or secret intercourse of the parents due to external prohibitions or obstacles. During or before pregnancy, there is a prophecy, in the form of a dream or oracle, cautioning against his birth, and usually threatening danger to the father (or his representative). As a rule, he is surrendered to the water, in a box. He is then saved by animals, or by lowly people (shepherds), and is suckled by a female animal or by a humble woman.[17]

Most striking is the almost exact correspondence of this "saga" to the birth of Kṛṣṇa, particularly in view of the fact that the Kṛṣṇa story was not one of Rank's examples. There are also, however, several obvious parallels with the birth of Śaṅkara. The two major deviations are the lack of a conflict with a father figure such as Kaṃsa and the absence of an abandonment and adoption by other more humble parents such as Nanda and Yaśodā. The rejection by one's parents implied in the abandonment is, nonetheless, in a somewhat different form, the major theme in Śaṅkara's childhood as well, as we shall see. In Śaṅkara's case, to briefly anticipate our argument, the conflict between parent and child-hero is expressed as, or is an example of, the opposing loyalties of the duty to parents and ancestors to preserve the family (*gṛhasthāśrama-dharma*) and the duty or right to renounce family concerns and seek one's personal salvation (*saṃnyāsa-dharma*).

An important aspect of the theory of incarnations or *avatāras*, and

of the Buddhas and Tīrthankaras as well, is that the god or supernatural person manifests himself on earth in periods when heresy and evil are triumphing and true religion and morality need to be rescued from the depths into which they have fallen. The *avatārā*, Buddha or Tīrthankara is the renewer who rescues man and earth from encroaching chaos and reestablishes the cosmic order. In the famous formulation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* (IV. 6-7), Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna:

> Though (I am) unborn, and Myself (is) imperishable, though (I am) the Lord of all creatures, yet establishing Myself in My own nature, I come into (empiric) being through My power (*māyā*)....Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna), then I send forth (create incarnate) Myself.[18]

Although the *avatāra* theory relates primarily to Vaiṣṇavism, it is not exclusive to it. Already in Gupta times we find Kauṇḍinya, the commentator on the *Pāśupatasūtra* claiming that the reputed author of those *sūtras*, the ascetic Lakulīśa (c. 125 A.D.?), was an incarnation of Śiva.[19] The fact that Lakulīśa, like Śaṅkara, had four main disciples suggests the possibility of direct influence. By medieval times almost every famous sage or saint was regarded as the full or partial incarnation of one god or other, a degeneration of the *avatāra* doctrine seen in full flower in the Śaṅkara hagiographies.

The "rise of unrighteousness" which Śiva as Śaṅkara sets out to eradicate is represented by the various theological and sectarian opponents he defeats in the course of his Tours of Victory(*digvijaya*-s). Some of these opponents, such as the *mīmāṃsā* theologians Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Maṇḍana Miśra are treated quite respectfully since they revere the Vedas and, according to the texts, have helped rid the country of the heretical Buddhists. Other groups, such as the Kāpālikas, are dealt with more harshly.[20] The itineraries of the Tours of Victory and the identity of Śaṅkara's opponents vary widely in the different hagiographies, but the most important seems to be that described in chapter fifteen of Mādhava's text.[21] Śaṅkara first meets and defeats some Śāktas in Rāmeśvaram (vss. 1-3); then some tantric worshippers of Bhagavatī in Kāñcī (vss. 4-5); the Kāpālika Krakaca in Karṇāta (vss. 8-28); the Śaivite dualist Nīlakaṇṭha and his disciple Haradatta in Gokarṇa on the west coast (vss.29-72);[22] some Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātras in Dvārakā (vss. 73-75); the *bhedābheda vedāntin* Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara in Ujjain (vss. 76-140); some Jains among

the Bahlikas or Bāctrians (vss. 141-55); a Śākta named Abhinavagupta in Kāmarūpa or Assam (vss. 158-60);[23] and finally some not clearly identifiable philosophers in Bengal (vss. 161-62). What is striking in this list is the almost complete lack of Vaiṣṇava opponents. The only ones that appear, the Dvārakā Pāñcarātras are disposed of in three verses. One possible explanation is that the South, the region with which Mādhava and his sources seem best acquainted, was in fact dominated by Śaivites in their time and probably as far back as Śaṅkara's time as well. The general dominance of Śaivism in the South from a comparatively early period is, of course, an accepted fact, but Vaiṣṇavism also had some strength there, particularly in parts of Tamilnad, and it is curious that Vaiṣṇava sects receive so little mention.

The conflict between the Śaivite bias of the hagiographies and Vaiṣṇavism is instead surreptitiously introduced through the implied comparison of the childhoods of Śaṅkara and Kṛṣṇa, and through the association of Vaiṣṇavism with the life of the householder or *gṛhasthāśrama-dharma* and Śaivism with the life of the ascetic or *samnyāsāśrama-dharma*. On the side of Vaiṣṇavism and the *dharma* of the householder stand Śaṅkara's mother, worship of Viṣṇu, family obligation, water and sea-monsters, caves, and yogic trance. With Śaivism and the *dharma* of the ascetic stand Śaṅkara himself as the *avatāra* of Śiva, renunciation and abandonment of family, homeless wandering, worship of *Śiva*, and *mukti* or complete enlightenment itself.

To better understand the sociological and psychological basis of this dialectic a variety of theoretical models suggest themselves. Wendy O'Flaherty in her valuable article, "Asceticism and Sexuality in the Mythology of Śiva,"[24] has identified the tension between ascetic renunciation and sensual gratification as the foundation of most Śaivite mythology. It is possible to interpret the life of Śaṅkara as simply another expression of this basic conflict, but this only transfers the question of *why* such a theme to Śiva. A more intriguing experiment would be to try to assimilate the conflict to Georges Dumézil's sociological and historical theory of the tripartite "ideology" of the Indo-Europeans. In this case one might relate Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with Dumézil's third "function", i.e. with natural fecundity and agriculture; Śaṅkara's protector King Sudhanvan, the incarnate Indra, and perhaps the disciple Padmapāda converted into the fierce Man-lion with the second, warrior function;

and Śaṅkara himself, possibly joined with his disciple or the god Śiva himself, with the third, religious sovereignty function. On the whole, however, the logical and historical difficulties in squeezing the Śaṅkara story into Dumézil's theoretical frame seem too great to consider this approach seriously.

Most useful, I think, to explain the thematic conflict of the hagiographies is the sociological analysis of Louis Dumont as put forward in his well-known article, "World Renunciation in Indian Religions".[25] Very crudely summarized, Dumont contrasts the lack of substance or individuality of the Indian "man-in-the-world", the man caught in the web of traditional religious law and caste society, with the freedom and individuality of the ascetic who renounces this society and becomes an "individual-outside-the-world". The personal identity of the ordinary householder is defined only through the great web of family and caste relationships. The peculiarity of the Indian situation is that in order to acquire the individuality which this man-in-the-world feels is lacking, he feels constrained to reject the material world and seek after an "other world" which in fact entails his own extinction. Although there exists, according to Dumont, a dialectic by which the world-view and social institutions of the man-in-the-world are pervaded by those of the renouncer and vice-versa, both the renouncer and the man-in-the-world remain true and significant as ideal types. One criticism which can nonetheless be leveled against Dumont is that he underestimates the extent to which an "in-the-world" ethic pervades the vocation of the renouncer in the form of his loving concern for his fellow man and his efforts to lead them to salvation.[26] In the Śaṅkara hagiographies, although the conflict between the *dharma*-s of the householder and ascetic is obviously central, Śaṅkara's altruistic concern both for his fellow man in general and his mother in particular are emphasized throughout.

To see how this dialectic between the renouncer and the householder is developed in the hagiographies we will return to a review of the story as given by Mādhava.[27] The fourth chapter takes Śaṅkara up to his sixth or seventh year:

> In his first year Śaṅkara mastered his mother tongue and learned to read letters. In his second he could read and was able to intuitively understand recited Sanskrit texts. By his third year he was reciting the Vedas, teaching his fellow students and defeating in debate adults. Sometime in his third year his father died. After Śaṅkara had been consecrated for a full year, his

mother, with the aid of her kinsmen, had him invested with the sacred thread. This took place in his fifth year. By this time he had mastered everything his teacher could teach him including the Vedas and their six auxiliary subjects, analytical philosophy (*ānvīkṣikī*), Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Mīmāṃsā. He has also intuitively grasped the truth of *advaita*.

One day he entered the house of a poor Brahman couple to beg alms. The pious wife of the Brāhman lamented that she had nothing to give him and had thus caused to be in vain her present life. All she could find to offer him was a single *āmalaka* fruit. Impressed by her sincerity, Śaṅkara interceded with Lakṣmī, the wife of Viṣṇu, and she filled the house with *āmalakas* of solid gold.

Śaṅkara's precocity is, of course, perfectly natural for the incarnation of a great god. The death of his father, a worshipper of Śiva, leaves him with only his mother, who favors Viṣṇu, to represent the ties of parental affection and duty. The miracle he performs with the aid of Lakṣmī does not seem to have any specific Kṛṣṇaite parallel but is noteworthy in that as a child he invokes the aid of a Vaiṣṇava deity and that the blessing conferred is one of simple material prosperity of a household.

In his fifth chapter Mādhava relates how the young scholar requests and eventually receives his mother's reluctant permission to become a wandering ascetic (*saṁnyāsin*), takes a man named Govindanātha as his first instructor in *advaita* Vedānta, and then travels to the holy city of Varanasi on the Gaṅgā.

One of Śaṅkara's first exploits is to bring the river Pūrṇā near to his own house to save his aged mother the necessity of walking so far to bathe. This incident has a definite Kṛṣṇaite parallel in the episode in which Balarāma, the brother of Kṛṣṇa and either co-incarnation of Viṣṇu or incarnation of the cosmic serpent Śeṣa, drags the river Yāmunā from its bed. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* version (V. 25), the drunken Balarāma orders the river to come to him so that he can bathe. When the river refuses Balarāma drags her about with his ploughshare. The differences between the two stories, here as elsewhere, redound to Śaṅkara's credit. Śaṅkara does not act out of a drunken whim but to aid his poor mother. He changes the river's course not by violence but by convincing it to move of its own accord with flattering verses of praise. Another important feature of this episode is the association of Śaṅkara's mother with the river and water, but it will be better to postpone our discussion

of this until we have seen some of the other ways in which the theme of water enters the story.

Some time after Śaṅkara relocates the river, the king of Kerala arrives to pay homage to the young sage and to present him with a magnificent elephant, gold and other gifts. Śaṅkara refuses the king's munificence since worldly pleasures only distract from the pursuit of learning and salvation. In Kṛṣṇaite myth the ruling king of Mathurā, Kaṃsa, is the enemy of Kṛṣṇa and instead of sending gifts he dispatches a host of demons to kill the young cowherd including one in the form of a mighty elephant.

Since Śaṅkara had already completed his studies, his mother and kinsmen begin searching for a suitable bride for him to marry. Like his dead father before him, Śaṅkara desires instead to go directly from the stage of celibate student to that of celibate ascetic. Meanwhile, a group of famous sages arrives to pay their respects to Śaṅkara, as, in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (X. 84), a similar contingent of sages arrives to pay homage to the young Kṛṣṇa. The spokesman of the sages who visit Śaṅkara, Agastya, foretells the child's early death, a prediction which, from Śaṅkara's point of view, makes his renunciation all the more urgent. When Śaṅkara openly requests that his mother allow him to become an ascetic, however, she refuses with the complaint that this would leave her with no one to protect her, perform her funeral ceremony, and make the necessary offerings to their ancestors. Śaṅkara agrees to delay his decision. Then one day as he enters the river to bathe his foot is seized by a crocodile (*makara*). He calls his mother and tells her that the crocodile will release him only if she agrees to his renunciation. His poor mother has no choice but to consent. Even so she extracts a promise that he will perform her funeral rites. Just before Śaṅkara departs he hears the disembodied voice of Kṛṣṇa who pleads that Śaṅkara save the Kṛṣṇa idol in the nearby temple which was being attacked by the newly moved river Pūrṇā. Śaṅkara easily lifts up the heavy idol and puts it on higher ground. Finally, having received the blessings of both his mother and Kṛṣṇa, he sets out, "his heart set on Kṛṣṇa", in search of a guru.

In this sequence we can see clearly the thematic conflict between the *dharma*-s of the householder and the ascetic as well as the association of Kṛṣṇa (and hence Vaiṣṇavism) with the former. Although Śaṅkara proves his superiority to Kṛṣṇa by saving the idol of that god, he, nonetheless, departs meditating on the same god. At this stage

of his career Śaṅkara has still not broken completely either with his past or with his dependence upon others. When he reaches the banks of another river, the Narmadā, he encounters the sage Govindanātha, or He Whose Lord is Govinda (Kṛṣṇa), and chooses him as his guru. This Govindanātha is none other than an incarnation of the great *yogin* and grammarian Patañjali,[28] who is in turn an incarnation of the cosmic serpent Śeṣa whom we have already met as Kṛṣṇa's elder brother Balarāma. When Śaṅkara arrives at Govindanātha's hermitage the sage is sitting meditating in his subterranean cave. When Śaṅkara praises him he wakes from his yogic trance and asks: "Who (or What) are you?" Śaṅkara replies with a verse demonstrating his intuitive grasp of *advaita* Vedānta. Govinda acknowledges the superiority of Saṅkara as the incarnation of Śiva but agrees to accept him as a pupil in order to preserve the tradition of transmission of *advaita* doctrine.

This episode resembles in some respects the curious encounter between Kṛṣṇa and King Mucukunda. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* version (V. 23), Kṛṣṇa is pursued by a Yavana king and cunningly leads him to a cave where Mucukunda has lain asleep for many years. The Yavana kicks the sleeping figure thinking it to be Kṛṣṇa and is burnt to ashes by the supernatural power of Mucukunda's fiery glance. Mucukunda then asks Kṛṣṇa: "Who are you?" Kṛṣṇa replies that he is the son of the Yādava Vasudeva and Mucukunda then recognizes him as the incarnation of Viṣṇu.

Mādhava's text next relates how one day during the rainy season, while Govindanātha is sitting in yogic trance in his cave, the river Narmadā begins to flood and threatens to drown him. Śaṅkara grabs his own begging bowl, consecrates it with a *mantra*, and places it at the entrance to the cave. All the waters are magically absorbed in the bowl and Govindanātha, like the Kṛṣṇa image before him, is saved from the river's destructive waters. This incident also has a parallel in Kṛṣṇaite myth in the story of Kṛṣṇa saving the cowherds of Gokula from the angered god of rain, Indra, by raising up the mountain Govardhana to protect them. This incident many scholars have interpreted as reflecting the rejection of the religion of the old Vedic pantheon. Given the many correspondences between the myths and legends of Kṛṣṇa and Śaṅkara, it is reasonable to conclude that the Śaivite hagiographers have in part a similar intention to prove the superiority of Śiva to Viṣṇu and to elevate Śaṅkara, the *avatāra* of Śiva, to a level of popularity equal to that of

Kṛṣṇa. The very emphasis on Śaṅkara's childhood, a theme continued in the hagiographies of later saints such as Kabīr, is an indication of Kṛṣṇaite influence and of an attempt to counteract or take advantage of the natural appeal of the myths of the cowherd god.

One aspect of the story we have left to one side is the role played by rivers and water. At each stage in his development Śaṅkara has one or more encounters with a river which presents an obstacle or danger which Śaṅkara masters.[29] In India, as in most world mythologies including psychoanalysis, rivers and water are also female goddesses. Although rivers and river goddesses are generally beneficial and auspicious, they can also become powerful sources of danger and destruction. In part this simply reflects the facts of nature. In addition, however, water has acquired symbolic characteristics beyond its purely natural associations. Water can represent the life of the unconscious, life before the evolution of the names and forms of creation, a regression to a primal unity, a return to the womb of nature, the peace of death itself.

A graphic Hindu myth of this ambivalence is that of the churning of the ocean by the gods and demons at the beginning of creation. Their object was to secure the ambrosia of immortality, but before this came to the surface a great many other magical substances arose including the cosmic poison which Śiva swallowed to save the universe. Śiva's relation to water is thus hostile from the very beginning. Śiva is a god of the mountains, of ascetic heat and yogic power, the god who burns to dust the god of love, a god of sublimation and not regression. Viṣṇu, on the other hand, is more at home in the watery element. He rests in the cosmic waters on the world serpent Śeṣa who is, in fact, part of himself. As Kṛṣṇa, his amorous sport with the cowherd girls takes place near and in the water of the sacred Yāmunā. The goddess Yāmunā, however, is also the sister of the god of death while the beneficent Śeṣa has an evil counterpart in Kāliya, the cruel serpent in the Yāmunā whom Kṛṣṇa defeats and banishes to the ocean. Kāliya and Śeṣa may be said to represent two aspects of what H. Zimmer has called "the giant serpent power of the world abyss", the "ever threatening counter-current, antagonistic to the trend of evolution, which periodically halts, engulfs and takes back what has already been given form".[30]

In the story of Śaṅkara, the regressive feminine quality of the river Pūrṇā is emphasized by its association with his mother. Śaṅkara first brings it near to their house for her, then, when he

wishes to abandon her, he is trapped in the same river by the *makara*, an animal which also graces the banner of the god of love. Śaṅkara is released only after he has obtained his mother's consent to his renunciation. River, mother, crocodile and the Kṛṣṇa idol he saves are all forces striving to keep him in the bosom of the family as dutiful son, husband and father. For Śaṅkara the continuity of family life is a form of death; in renunciation he finds the freedom and individuality the householder lacks. Here again we find another curious contrast and parallel with the life of Kṛṣṇa. From this point of view the life-styles of both Śaṅkara and the young Kṛṣṇa are attempts to evade the anonymity of the Indian man-in-the-world and win personal freedom and individuality: one through ascetic renunciation, the other through adulterous sexual license, both paths being negations of traditional society.

Govindanātha lives along the banks of the Narmadā. As a goddess this river is the wife of Purukutsa into whose body Viṣṇu entered to aid the Nāgas or Serpents against the subterranean Gandharvas. The goddess herself has the form of a Nāga. As we have noted, Govindanātha is an incarnation of the cosmic serpent, Śeṣa. While Śaṅkara remains with his Vaiṣṇava preceptor he remains still in an incomplete and dependent stage of his development. He finally breaks this dependence when he collects in his bowl the flood which threatens to drown his teacher as he sits in yogic trance in his subterranean cave. The images of the flood, trance, and cave are, like the river and water serpents, associated with regression and dependence. Śaṅkara's begging bowl, on the other hand, is the badge of the homeless ascetic and as such is the means to his release. When all the waters of the flood have been absorbed in this bowl and the dark clouds of the rainy season have left the sky, Govindanātha instructs Śaṅkara to travel on alone to Varanasi, the city of Śiva on the Gaṅgā, to preach *advaita* and compose the texts which would establish its supremacy for all time.[31]

This brings Śaṅkara to his third and most important river, the Gaṅgā. This most holy of rivers, the very wife of Śiva, is said to spring from the toe of Viṣṇu but was first brought to earth by the sage Bhagīratha to bathe the ashes of the sons of Sagara. To lessen the great impact of her waters, Śiva caused her to fall to earth through his own matted locks. In order to enter Varanasi Śaṅkara has to cross this river. He dives into the water and is carried off by the swift current to the other side where he emerges glistening in the

moonlight "like an image of Śiva carved in moonstone". In this episode the principal motif is precisely the crossing to the other shore, a universal symbol for a decisive turning point in a person's life. In India this image is important not only in Hinduism but also in Jainism, whose chief saints are known as Tīrthankaras or Ford-makers, and in Buddhism where enlightenment is traditionally described as a passage to the other shore.[32] When Śaṅkara crosses the Gaṅgā he abandons the life of a student as he had earlier abandoned that of son and potential householder. Likewise he abandons his varied associations with Vaiṣṇavism and immediately goes to pay homage to the feet of Viśveśvara, the form of Śiva who is the patron deity of Varanasi.

A final episode which draws together perfectly the thematic contrast between, on the one hand, the *dharma* of the householder and Vaiṣṇavism and, on the other, the *dharma* of the ascetic and Śaivism is that of the death of Śaṅkara's mother. In Mādhava's account (XIV. 29-55), Śaṅkara learns through his yogic power that his mother is ill and levitates himself to her side. She then requests that he honor his former promise to perform her funeral rites and cause her to reach the heavenly worlds (*puṇya-lokān*) by the path prescribed in the sacred texts. Śaṅkara first imparts to her instruction about the unqualified Absolute (*nirguṇa-brahman*). This she rejects as being too difficult to understand. Next he recites for her a hymn to Śiva entitled "Śiva-bhujaṅga". The pleased god sends his messengers to guide her soul but when she sees that they bear the marks of Śiva's trident and bow she refuses to leave with them. Śaṅkara then recites a hymn to Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa who sends his own messengers whom Śaṅkara's mother accepts. They take her to the highest heaven (*param padam*) by the ancient path of the souls who do not return.[33]

In order to perform the funeral rites Śaṅkara calls his kinsmen and requests that they give him some sacred fire. They refuse claiming that he has no authority (*adhikāra*) to perform the ceremony since he had cut himself off from the rights and duties of persons in caste society when he abandoned his sacred thread and became an ascetic. Although their objection is legally correct, Śaṅkara curses them to be forever prohibited from the study of the Veda, to live near cremation grounds, and to be unacceptable as donors of alms to ascetics. Śaṅkara kindles his own fire and performs the ceremony alone.

In this episode the relative status of metaphysical wisdom,

worship of Śiva, and worship of Viṣṇu is clearly established. No theologically and ritually acceptable mode of worship is rejected but each is suitable to persons of different character and levels of understanding. Those ready for final liberation meditate on the unqualified *brahman*; those of somewhat lesser spiritual achievement worship Śiva; and those still lower on the scale worship Viṣṇu and his *avatāra*-s. Even for these, however, it is possible to enter on the path of liberation and after death dwell in the Brahmā-worlds. The conflict between the ascetic Śaṅkara and his householder kinsmen is yet another microcosm of the conflict between the ascetic individual-outside-the-world and the householder man-in-the-world. A curious aspect of the episode is the technical illegality of Śaṅkara's performance of his mother's funeral. This suggests firstly that the event is historically true, but it may also be interpreted metaphorically as an attempt on Śaṅkara's part to establish some kind of a compromise or *modus vivendi* between the modes of life of the ascetic and the householder which thus reinforces the similar accommodation implicit in the idea of different but complimentary modes of worship. This kinsmen's rejection of Śaṅkara's request results in the curse which leaves them not only forever cut off from the first step of the path of salvation but with reduced prestige within hierarchical caste society as well.

To sum up, we have seen how Śaṅkara's hagiography presents the famous theologian as an incarnation of the god Śiva. Like Śaṅkara himself, however, the texts regard metaphysics as more important than the choice of object of devotion and feel free to portray Śaṅkara as an opponent of non-advaita Śaivite sects. The rivalry between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism is nonetheless essential since it is used to display and develop the basic thematic contrast between the life orientations of the renouncing ascetic and the householder. This is expressed in a variety of ways but particularly in terms of a comparison between the life of Kṛṣṇa, the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, and that of Śaṅkara, the *avatāra* of Śiva. The best theoretical model for understanding the underlying dialectic of the contrast, we have suggested, is Louis Dumont's analysis of the basic tension in the Indian world-view between the desire for and fear of human freedom and individuality, between the ascetic who is an individual-outside-the-world and the insubstantial man-in-the-world of caste society.

Notes

I would like to thank the members of the workshop of the Conference on Religion in South India (Philadelphia, May 1973) and of the Seminar on Contemporary Asia (Mexico City, June 1973) for the comments they have offered on preliminary drafts of this paper. This contribution was published in *the Biographical Process. Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion*, edited by Frank E. Reynolds and Donald Capps, 1976. Mouton Publishers, the Hague-Paris. (Religion and Reason Series, Vol. 11). The editors are grateful to Mouton and Co. for permission to republish the essay in this volume.

1. See V. Turner, "The Center Out There: Pilgrim's Goal," *History of Religions* XII (1973), 208-209.
2. A somewhat earlier date proposed by Hajime Nakamura has had increasing acceptance. See Sengaku Mayeda, "The Authenticity of the Bhagavadgītā-bhāṣya Ascribed to Śaṅkara," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd-und Ostasiens*, IX (1965), p. 155.
3. See J. Filliozat, "Représentations de Vāsudeva et Saṃkarṣaṇa au IIe siecle avant J.C.," *Arts Ariatiques*, Tome XXVI (1973), pp. 113-23. I would like to thank Professor Filliozat for this reference.
4. W. O'Flaherty has pointed out to me, in a personal letter, that the myth of the birth of the god Skanda, recounted in the *Mahābhārata*, may have priority over that of Kṛṣṇa. The Skanda myth, however, is much less a hagiography than the story of Kṛṣṇa while the actual historical precedence between the two is uncertain.
5. This condensed analysis, based mostly on the work of Weber, is now generally accepted and needs no elaborate defense. The subsequent evolution of these hagiographies is beyond the scope of this essay, but we will return to a rather detailed account of the relation between the hagiographies of Kṛṣṇa and Śaṅkara.
6. (2nd edition; Allahabad: Hindustāni Ekeḍemī, 1963), pp. 11-12.
7. Ed. with Dhanapatisūri's Diṇḍima commentary (Poona: Ānandāśram Press, 1915); ed. with Hindi translation by Baldev Upādhyāy (2nd ed.; Hardwar: Mahant Mahadevnāth, 1967); and an earlier edition unavailable to me edited by Kesnalāla Govindarāma Devāsrayī as *Saṅkṣepa-śaṅkara-vijaya* (Bombay: 1899).
8. Ed. J. Tarkapanchanana (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1868) and a new edition by Thiru N. Veeshinathan (Madras: University of Madras, 1971).
9. Ed. E.T. Chandrasekharan (Madras: Superintendent Government Press, 1954).
10. The texts include: Śrīparameśvara Kavikanthīvara, "Ācāryavijayaḥ a/s Ācāryavijayākhyānam," *JUB*, XXXVII, No. 6 (1968), 1-69; Nīlakaṇṭha, "Śrīśaṅkarābhyudayakāvyam," *JUB*, XXXIII, Part 2 (1964), 128-67; and Tirumala Dīkṣita, "Śrīśankarābhyudayamahākāvyam," *JUB*, XXXIV, Part 2 (1965), 138-87. The articles include: "Bṛhat-Śaṅkara-vijaya of Citsukhācārya and Prācīna-śaṅkara-vijaya of Ānandagiri a/s Ānanda-jñāna," *JUB*, XXIX, Part 2 (1960), 113-21; "Śaṅkara-vijaya of Anantānandagiri," *JUB*, XXX, Part 2 (1961), 73-80; and "Saṅkṣepa Śaṅkara Jaya of Mādhavācārya or

Śaṅkara Digvijaya of Śrī Vidyāraṇyamuni," *JUB*, XLI, No. 77 (1972), 1-23.

11. The best of these summaries are perhaps those by T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Sankaracharya* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 1968) and C.N. Krishnasamy Aiyar, *Sri Sankaracharya* (3rd ed.; Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., n.d.).
12. See *Śrī Śaṅkarācārya* (pp. 14-16) and "Saṅkṣepa Śaṅkara Jaya of..." respectively.
13. *Śrī Śaṅkarācārya*, p. 15.
14. "Saṅkṣepa Śaṅkara Jaya of..." pp. 5-7. The texts of Rājacūḍāmaṇi and Vyāsācala seem to be earlier than that of Mādhava while that of Tirumala Dīkṣita is later.
15. Paul Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaisnavism," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd-und Ost-asiens* IX (1965), 147-54.
16. It is by no means clear which if any of the devotional hymns were actually composed by Śaṅkara. For present purposes it is mostly sufficient that they have been accepted by his followers as authoritative.
17. *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, ed. P. Freund (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 65.
18. Trans. S. Radhakrishnan (2nd ed.; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949).
19. *Pāśupatasūtra* ed. R.A. Sastri (Trivandrum: University of Travancore, 1940), pp. 3-4.
20. The encounters between Śaṅkara and the Kāpālikas Ugrabhairava of Śrīparvata, Krakaca of Karṇāta, and Unmattabhairava of Ujjayinī are discussed in more detail in my *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 31-48. It is somewhat odd that this sect, which was never very influential, is portrayed as one of Śaṅkara's most assiduous opponents. Apparently it was used as a convenient stalking horse, objectionable for both theological and ritual reasons, for other more moderate Śaivite sects.
21. Ānandagiri, for instance, arranges the opponents into sects on the basis of the god they chiefly worshipped. This arrangement seems rather artificial and one doubts whether some of the sects listed really existed.
22. The sectarian affiliation of Nīlakaṇṭha and Haradatta is not certain. It is possible that they are intended to represent Pāśupatas or Śaiva Siddhāntins. The Pāśupata *Gaṇakārikā* was written by a Haradatta who is possibly the one mentioned here. Śaṅkara himself attacks the sect at considerable length in his Brahmasūtra commentary (II.2.37).
23. It is possible that Mādhava is erroneously referring to the Kashmiri Śaivite of the Pratyabhijñā school who lived *c.* 1000 A.D.
24. *History of Religions*, VIII (1969), 300-337 and IX (1969), 1-41. Although sexuality does not play a central role in the life of Śaṅkara, a popular episode found in several of the hagiographies tells how Śaṅkara finds himself at a loss when challenged to debate on the science of love by Sarasvatī or Ubhayabhāratī, the wife of Maṇḍana Miśra. In order to acquire the necessary expertise without breaking his ascetic vows, Śaṅkara temporarily incarnates himself in the dead body of King Amaruka and educates himself with the ladies of the king's harem.
25. Of the several published versions of this essay I have used that found in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, No. III, ed. Louis Dumont and D. Pocock (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1960), pp. 33-62.

26. This criticism was forcefully argued at the above noted 1973 workshop of the Conference on Religion in South India by Professor J. Filliozat. Another point worth mentioning is that for all the real originality of Dumont's formulation it is based on the traditional Indian distinction between the *saṃnyāsin* and the *gṛhastha*. The central role of the predilection toward renunciation and "life rejection" in Indian religions was earlier recognized by A. Schweitzer and M. Weber, both of whom Dumont acknowledges in a footnote (*ibid.*, p. 44).
27. Some of the ideas which follow I have presented in different form in "La Renunciatión de Śaṅkarācārya," *Estudios Orientales*, VII (1972), 335-42. Pages 343-58 of this article comprise a translation of chapter five of Mādhava's text.
28. Mādhava's text identifies what most modern scholars consider to have been two different sages by this name.
29. In this regard Dr. W. O'Flaherty, in her letter of 18 September 1973, has pointed out to me that there exist similar episodes in puranic mythology which relate to Śiva. For example, in the *Brahma-purāṇa* 35. 31-60 Śiva is grabbed by a water demon. In general Dr. O'Flaherty feels that I should have paid more attention to the Śaivite archetypes for the episodes in the life of Śaṅkara.
30. Zimmer, H., *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1946), p. 78.
31. Another encounter between Śaṅkara and a flood occurs in a story found in the late Sanskrit *Bhaktamālā* of Candradatta (Bombay: Sri Veṅkaṭeśvara Steam Press, saṃvat 1983 [1926]). According to this work (sarga 29 verses 24-53), Śaṅkara met somewhere in Marwar a Jain theologian and magician who created an illusion of a great flood and then of a boat in which to save himself. When the Jain got in the boat Śaṅkara by his own magic power (*māyā*) caused the boat to rise into the sky and then destroyed the whole illusion. The Jain was killed as he fell back to the dry land.
32. Some particularly striking examples of this image are found in E. Dimock's article, "Rabindranath Tagore—'The Greatest of the Bāuls of Bengal'," reprinted in *South and Southeast Asia*, ed. John A. Harrison (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1972), pp. 143-46. The examples are taken from Tagore and some of the Bāul poets, particularly Lālan Phakir.
33. A complete description of this famous soul journey is found in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* VI. 2.15.

10

CONTEMPORARY ŚAIVISM AND TAMIL IDENTITY: AN INTERPRETATION OF KUṆRAKKUṬI AṬIKAḶĀR

Charles A. Ryerson

In his essay, *Meaning and Modernization*,[1] Robert Bellah describes modernization as being primarily "a new mentality"—a new attitude toward change. "In all the great traditional civilizations the notion of change was charged with horror and fear and was contrasted with that...which does not change and which alone is of value." Modernization involves a mentality which views change as something "to be welcomed, to be responsibly and intelligently guided." For Bellah, this "new mentality" requires a "great social-psychological revolution" because "it seems to violate one of the cardinal requirements for organized action...namely, the need for continuity, for stability of orientation—in a word, for identity". At times, however, "this social-psychological revolution has produced social and personality systems capable of combining continuity and change, identity and openness". Modernization, then, "is always a moral and religious problem".

In this essay, originally given as a talk in 1965, Bellah follows Max Weber in seeing in the Protestant Reformation one of "the earliest and the deepest phases of this social-psychological revolution" which "reformulated the deepest level of identity symbols in order to open up entirely new possibilities of human action".

Bellah illustrates this thesis by looking at three Western nations: England, France, and Germany. "In England...this new secular ideology did not involve a repudiation of religion but went hand in hand with new popular forms of Protestantism, such as Methodism, which swept the English-speaking world in the eighteenth century. On the whole, such movements operated more to bring modern liberal values to social strata primarily unaffected by them than to oppose modernization, though under certain social conditions an anti-modern Protestantism could develop as in the case of some fundamentalist groups."

In France, however, the situation was different because the

Church was hostile to change. Liberalism did become institutionalized in France, however, after the triumph of the ideas of the Enlightenment in the Revolution of 1789. French liberalism has remained, however, primarily anti-Church.

Germany, to Bellah, is perhaps the most interesting case. In Germany, "we can see clearly for the first time the emergence of the great counter-modernizing ideologies that would be subsequently important in all the developing nations..." These ideologies he groups under two main headings; "romantic nationalist... and radical socialist".

For Bellah, "romantic nationalism" stresses "solidarity on the basis of primordial identities of language, ethnic origin, or religion.... The technique of romantic nationalism in the face of disturbances and disruptions of modernization has been to reemphasize the real or supposed unity of the hallowed past". "Radical socialism" uses a technique of playing on "the deep tensions existing in traditional society". In all such societies "there are disfavored strata...with a traditional...hostility toward the established authorities.... Radical socialism is precisely the ideology that tends to exploit this sacrilegious... hostility".

Bellah feels recent history has demonstrated that a fusing of these two "secondary ideologies" provides "a most potent ideological mixture and much of the world... is dominated by one or another version of it.... The point is that a combination of national solidarity on the basis of sentimental primordial imagery with a determination to overcome inherited injustice and to build a new society makes a powerful motivational basis for directed social change."

I have many questions about this thesis. As with most Western social scientists, Bellah over-emphasizes the Reformation and the Enlightenment. He has backed away, at least partially, from these enthusiasms.[2] Yet, while one can argue over the specifics of any given historical place and period, this approach does emphasize that modernization—whatever else it may be—is an ongoing reformulation of identity, combining continuity with change, and that in this reformulation religion can play a crucial role in revitalizing old symbols and/or in creating new ones. Further, in his contrast of Methodism with fundamentalism, Bellah underlines how religion can be either helpful or harmful in the creation of those "social-psychological revolutions" which determine how individuals and cultures react to change. His analysis leads one to focus on the

religious ideas and institutions, the meaningful symbols and interpretations, the world-view and ethos, of a changing society. The interaction of religion with politics and the fusion of romantic nationalism and radical socialism seem relevant in many contemporary contexts of rapid social change.

Certainly in Tamil Nadu this fusion and interaction is taking place. It is widely agreed that in the past hundred years there have been two main revolutions of thought which have swept through Tamil Nadu. First there has been a growth of "romantic nationalism". The "primordial identities of language and ethnic origin" have received renewed emphasis. This is not the time to explore this explosion of regional identity but it has drawn upon—and helped inspire—the thriving renaissance in Tamil language and literature and also has been stimulated by archaeological discoveries such as those in the Indus Valley. New myths, not all true but still very real for those Tamils who believe them, have arisen which conjure up a hallowed Dravidian past unpolluted by an "Āryan race" and its ideas. The second revolution has elaborated real and supposed economic and social grievances against upper caste Brahmins, "playing upon the deep tensions" existing between "disfavored strata" and "established authorities". These two movements, romantic nationalism and radical socialism, have been fused into an ideology of considerable power. However, it should be said that these twin revolutions in Tamil Nadu, this "reformulation of identity symbols", has links with processes and personalities which stretch back through the Tamil past. Anti-Brahmin sentiments and love for the Tamil language are not new emotions in Tamil Nadu. One doubts, however, if they previously were so powerful, involved so many people, and were so fused with political passions. Modern technology, politics, and bureaucratic structures have made a difference.

These twin movements in Tamil Nadu have been studied, at least to some degree, from political and historical perspectives. Where the ideological dimension has been the focus of attention, the emphasis has been on the anti-religious approach of the Ṭirāvita Kaḻakam (DK) of E.V. Ramasamy Naicker. The D.K., to use Bellah's categories, represents the "French" wing of the movement—atheistic and rationalistic. At times the Ṭirāvita Muṉṉeṟṟa Kaḻakam (DMK) approach has been equated with that of the D.K.[3] Even in the perceptive writings of Robert Hardgrave, one reads of the Dravidian movement's "making its truce with Hinduism".[4]

Actually, from the beginning of the movement, there has been a more "English" strand present. A strong element of Śaivism has been in the mix of which the Dravidian Renaissance is composed. Śaiva Siddhānta was taken as one religious rallying point for Dravidian sentiments and as early as 1886 a Śaiva Siddhānta Sabha was established. Nallaswami Pillai, a non-Brahmin, thought of Śaiva Siddhānta as "the Dravidian religion". By 1918, however, he was somewhat discouraged and told a Justice Party meeting that "Śaiva Siddhānta did not have the same force in mobilizing non-Brahmin opinion as the Justice Party did."[5] Events have proved that Nallaswami Pillai was too pessimistic. Śaiva Siddhānta was alive and well *within* the Justice Party, as well as outside, and its renaissance is still flourishing today. Indeed, in popular forms, it probably is gaining an ever greater hold on the Tamil masses.

Its influence can even be seen as one component in the 1949 split between the DK and DMK. E.V. Ramasamy Naicker remained a cheerful and unrepentent atheist until his death in 1973 but when C.N. Annadurai wrote the reformist movie *Veḷḷaikkāri* in 1949 he stressed a line from the sixth century *Tirumaṇṭiram* of Tirumūlar, a quotation which has become a DMK slogan : "Only one God and only one community."[6] The attitude of the DMK on the question of God remains ambivalent, however.[7]

Perhaps the personality who is most closely identified with Śaiva Siddhānta and the DMK is Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikaḷār. The head of one of the non-Brahmin Śaiva *maṭam*-s in Tamil Nadu, this Ātiṉakartar's full title is Tavattiru Tēvacikāmani Aruṉacala Tēcika Paramācāryacuvāmikal. He is known as Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikaḷār because of the village where his Āṭīnam is located. He was active in organizing the Tamil non-Brahmin *maṭam*-s into a more active force and in excluding Brahmin Śaiva *maṭam*-s from the association. His closeness to the DMK can be amply documented. He was appointed by their government to the Upper House of the State Legislature and he actively influences the powerful Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Board. During the DMK's recent troubles, the influential *Illustrated Weekly of India* ran an article on the controversy by R.G. Krishnan. "As we waited to be ushered into the presence of (former DMK Chief Minister) Karunanidhi," he wrote, "we were surprised to see a man in saffron climbing down the stairs. What did a *sannyasin* have to do with a politician who reviled orthodoxy? We were told he was Kunrakkudi Adigalar,

the head of a *math*, and much respected."[8] The fact that Krishnan did not know of him perhaps accounts for his acceptance of this flattering characterization. Kuṉrakkuṭi is in actuality extremely controversial because of his political activities, but that is all the more reason to have an intellectual glimpse of him. In this paper, I will not examine the gossip that flows about him, as it does about any controversial figure. I also will not evaluate the many social service activities that his *maṭam* sponsors. Rather, I will concentrate on some of his ideas and interpretations, especially those which illustrate the ways he consciously and unconsciously relates Tamil traditions to the Tamil present. My information has been gained from some of his writings, from some personal interviews, and from watching him "in action" at some meetings.

It might be useful to briefly describe one of these meetings. On February 27, 1972, Kuṉrakkuṭi spoke at a function in the beautiful hill station of Ootacamund. The meeting was organized by a group known as the Friends Forum. The Forum is a DMK-oriented organization of lower middle class civil servants who officially cannot be related to political movements. The group, about 50 to 75 men, feels its main function is to "educate" the community and so Kuṉrakkuṭi was invited to speak. He agreed, but was paid well for the speech, and was put up at a good hotel.

The Forum had rented (for a reduced fee since their connection with the governing party was well known) a cinema theatre for the Sunday morning talk. On that cold morning, more than 300 people attended. Kuṉrakkuṭi was in great form. He is probably in his 50's, has a flowing beard streaked with grey, and has piercing eyes. This rather stern exterior is mellowed by his smile and his wit. He spoke in faultless contemporary Tamil.

He began by criticizing the invocation—a song based on words by Sundaram Pillai, another father of the Tamil Renaissance. The song mentions Kannada, Telegu, and Malayalam, as well as Tamil. Kuṉrakkuṭi objected to the song because he felt it divided Dravidians into four groups. He said that Tamil was the mother of the other three languages and that "Āryan conquerors" had been responsible for their division, with Sanskrit entering into them in different degrees. Now it is necessary to recreate their former unity. If that is not possible, he said, at least their division should not be celebrated.

He also told an amusing story. Two high school football (soccer) teams were playing a rough, close game. Suddenly a player

had an opportunity to kick a goal. But he paused and looked at his coach for direction before he kicked. A member of the other team, utilizing that moment, stole the ball. Kuṉrakkuṭi compared that pause with a type of prayer. We do not have to ask God what to do when our duty is clear to us and we have the means to accomplish it. Prayer must be left for those things over which we have no control. For the main business of life, men must get on with their obvious jobs. If they stop and pray about those, their opportunities will be lost.

These two anecdotes, the criticism of the prayer song and the football story, serve to highlight Kuṉrakkuṭi's romantic nationalism and its connection with the third of Bellah's "primordial identities" —religion. This relationship is made much more explicit in many of Kuṉrakkuṭi's writings:

> Tamil, of all the languages of the world, is the most fit for the feeling of piety. Songs which melt the heart are only in Tamil. In the field of religion we have much ancient fame.... The Tamil religious creed is very ancient, but due to the nature of its philosophy, it shines as something new, not as a dead relic. Our religious creed has the ability to fulfil (or satisfy) even the new 'Siddhantas' such as Marxism.[9]

The latter part of this quotation shows how religion can ease the way into modernity. The philosophy of a golden age is also new and modern. By returning to the old, one really becomes new— or by adopting the new, one becomes his original self.

Another of Bellah's "primordial identities", language, is also stressed in this quotation. Kuṉrakkuṭi often refers to it:

> One can forget anything in this world, but one cannot...forget one's mother tongue. To live using a language other than one's own is like walking with an artificial leg. Just as any race...protects its own language, we Tamils too...should safeguard Tamil civilization by protecting Tamil thought and feeling...Only then can we rise to the heights as Tamil children and great people following the way of Tamil.[10]

The reference to "race" brings up another of Bellah's "primordial identities"—ethnic origin—and again it explicitly interrelates with religion:

> Great *vedas* would have appeared in Tamil but they were destroyed or disappeared due to the tidal waves of the sea and earth-

quakes.[11] Only the wealth of *Thirumarai* helps us today. This wealth too has been covered and concealed. Some concealed it fearing that their life of dominion over us could be shaken if that treasure were known. . . . If the *Thirumarais* had been destroyed when hidden, what would have been our plight now? But how can they, who felt themselves superior because of their abundance of philosophy, now degrade us with words?[12]

It should be clear that Kuṉrakkuṭi does accept the contemporary myths of the Dravidian movement. In conversations and speeches he reiterates that Āryans and Dravidians are separate races, that the Dravidians of Mohenjo-daro and of Tamil Nadu are the same, that Brahmins are Āryans who (like the tribes which destroyed the Indus Civilization) continue to pollute and degrade Tamil culture.

In looking at Tamil history, Kuṉrakkuṭi has no hesitation in choosing the two figures whom he most admires and with whom he most identifies. One is Tiruvaḷḷuvar, author of the *Kuṟaḷ*, and the other is the *Nayaṉmar*, Appar. Because of the necessity for brevity, I shall speak about his approach to the latter and ignore the former, except to say that he sees the *Kuṟaḷ* as a Śaiva book, following a long company of thinkers who see their own philosophy mirrored in that eclectic work.

In his comments on Appar many of Kuṉrakkuṭi's major themes come forth. He begins by stating his disagreements with Ramasamy Naicker. In an interview, he has told me that he greatly admired E.V.R. for his social reforms, but disagreed strongly with his atheism. He writes, "It is my firm belief that the great Appar is more qualified to make social reform than people like Ingersoll,[13] Plato, and Socrates. If one wants to reform something he must have faith in that thing."[14] Then, in describing Appar, Kuṉrakkuṭi indirectly describes the way he sees himself. "People like Appar accepted the old tradition and then bridged the old and the new."[15]

He looks at the founding of Tamil temples and finds that the ancient Tamil kings made mistakes which hurt the growth of Śaivism. First the kings paid for the building of the temples:

> "Because of this it was not possible for the people to think, 'This is our property.
>
> We must take care of it. We must weed out the bushes that grow around the walls and *gopuram-s*.' (One reason Kuṉrakkuṭi admires Appar is the latter's hoe and the physical service it symbolizes.) People began to feel that the temple belonged to the trustees. But the trustees just tried to make profit from it."[16]

The second mistake was that the kings gave the temples lots of property. "If the temples and *maṭam*-s have a permanent source of income then they are not concerned whether or not the people visit them.... Our Appar thought that the religious institutions should be ... run in relation to the people."[17]

Kuṉrakkuṭi's social critique then becomes more specific. "It was the rich that brought our religion down in the middle ages. Religion forgot its duty to speak for the poor.... But our Appar, who lived in the seventh century, said, 'God is the guardian of the deserted....' "[18] Kuṉrakkuṭi continues this theme:

> Man gets much from the society, but he is shy in his repayment.... We must give much to the society.... This is the goal...of kind men.... Appar harshly condemns empty ritual.... (He) emphasizes that we must realize God is everywhere. He lives in every living thing. So we must love all living things.... But what is going on now? We pay many honors to God but we let human beings roll in the dust and suffer like insects caught in the drain. Yet these poor people are the property, the abode, the reflection of God."[19] Kuṉrakkuṭi also quotes Appar to show that he opposed caste divisions.[20]

Kuṉrakkuṭi then becomes even more "radical socialist" and in relating Appar to this stance he engages in what many might believe to be fanciful exegesis. He quotes Appar's famous *bhakti* verse:

> Like the faultless *vīṇa*,
> And the evening moon,
> The blowing Southern breeze,
> And the fragrant spring,
> Like a bee-haunted pool;
> Like all these is
> The shade of the feet of my Lord."[21]

Then he writes that "all these are common property", so all, at the feet of the Lord, should be able to enjoy everything equally. "No economic level, or religion, or race, or language, should gain more enjoyment than another."[22]

He has an admiration for Karl Marx, telling me once that "only Marxism could equal Śaiva Siddhānta in its social concern",[23] although he carefully added that he was not a Marxist. A picture of Lenin hangs on his wall, next to one of Tiruvaḷḷuvar. In the article on Appar, he writes, "Even people like Karl Marx, who desired economic revolution, said that if the wealthy didn't give

money, one should snatch it from them. Appar speaks with this egalitarian economics in view...."[23]

Kuṉrakkuṭi closes this essay on Appar by writing:

> Appar said beautifully and emphatically in the seventh century whatever we consider modernity and modern thoughts in the twentieth century. Let us engage ourselves in the task of making a society based on service where people live harmoniously with love, with no difference of wealth, caste, or clan, which is what Appar in the seventh century wanted to see.[25]

Again one finds the traditionalizing of the modern—or the modernizing of the tradition—which distinguishes the effective reformer, "bridging the old and the new".

Much more can be written of Kuṉrakkuṭi's treatment of all of these themes, and of others, but this should set the tone or *ethos* of his thought. I cannot leave his beloved Appar without one last comment, however. He has further popularized some lines of Appar's which are important to the Dravidian Renaissance. They have often been used in language or in other disputes with the North: "Bound to no man are we; Death hath no terror for us, nor can horrid hell hold us! Illness and pain shall be alien to us; We shall not bend our knee to insolent might; We shall forever dwell in joy and feel sorrow no more."[26]

Before leaving Kuṉrakkuṭi it may be worthwhile to examine a bit more closely the *content* of his world-view. This examination will demonstrate his continuity with the Śaiva tradition, but also show some of the changes he rings on that tradition.

> Souls are always desiring something.... But as far as desire is concerned we have to adopt just the one thing—a limit. Just like anything else which requires a fence or a limit.... there must be a limit... for desire also. When man's feeling of desire exceeds... the limit, calamity befalls.... Man is compared with a monkey.... But the monkey has a far higher place than some men today.... (The monkey's) natural act is to jump from branch to branch. When it jumps from one branch to another, it does so only after leaving the previous branch. But a man of limitless desire doesn't leave the previous thing when getting hold of another; he wants to hold on to everything. Because of this limitless... desire, he is subjected to many sufferings.... It is better to say, 'Set a limit to your desire,' than to say, 'Exterminate desire,' because as far as man is concerned, desire is something that cannot be rooted out.... We must desire to live protecting love

> and virtue. We must desire to safeguard the unique nature of Tamil Nadu.... Because ancient Tamil Nadu lived according to the principle written in the *Kuṟaḷ* that 'They alone are joys which flow from the virtuous life,' it was great and culturally eminent. In order to grow in love and to protect virtue in the heart, religious life is necessary. There must be a principle... for human life.... When a man achieves good conduct and an attachment to a principle, that mental quality which cares for others is cultivated. That mental quality gives a nature which enables one to live not only without causing sorrow to others but also to endure the sorrow caused by others.[27]

Despite variations, his theme is constant: Tamil nationalism joined to a practical and social religion. Whatever may be said of him, Kuṉṟakkuṭi has actively supported some strong measures in line with his beliefs. He wants stronger controls for *maṭam*-s and temples and has sought to implement these through the H.R.C.E. Board. (But he objects to the state government's naming atheists to that Board). He has fought for *arccana*-s to be given in Tamil and he bemoans the Supreme Court decision which effectively reversed the DMK attempt to have non-Brahmins as temple priests. (The Court ruled that anyone could be a priest but that *Āgamic* rules must be followed. For the main temples the *Āgamas* prescribe Brahmins as *pūcāris*. Speaking of this decision, Kuṉṟakkuṭi gave me his giggle and broke into English, "The operation was a success but the patient died.")

When examining the relationship between popular Śaivism and the Tamils' ongoing quest for identity, other *guru*-s, *aṭikaḷār*-s, and *swami*-s should be viewed. In examining Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikaḷār, however, I think I have suggested that in the midst of Tamil Nadu's "social-psychological revolution" religion is playing an active and conscious part. It is my hope that I have also shown that Kuṉṟakkuṭi's interpretations of Śaivism are closer to the constructive role that Bellah gave to Methodism than to the closed salvation cults of fundamentalism. Kuṉṟakkuṭi does seem to be helping the Tamils in the important and always unfinished process of "reformulating identity symbols" at the deepest level. He is effective—despite of or because of his chauvinism—precisely because he does combine tradition with modernity, memory with receptivity, "continuity and change, identity and openness".

Notes

1. Robert N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 64-75. All the Bellah quotations come from this published version.
2. "To some extent this was a modern apology for liberal society and an attempt to show its relevance to the developing areas. I am by no means ready to repudiate this stage of my work, though I am increasingly aware of its limitations. I still believe that some equivalent of Protestant individualism and voluntaristic social organization is a necessary phase for any person or group who would fully participate in the potential freedom of the modern world." *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp. XIX-XX.
3. "No doubt some of the interfaith activities are a common defensive measure against the trend of increasingly secular legislation and ... against the outspoken and sometimes violent anti-Brahmin, anti-Hindu attacks sponsored by two regional political parties, the Dravidian Federation and the Dravidian Progressive Federation."
   Milton Singer, "The Radha-Krishna Bhajans of Madras City," *History of Religions*, 1963, Vol. 2, p. 210.
4. Robert Hardgrave, "Religion, Politics, and the DMK," *South Asian Politics and Religion*, ed. by Donald E. Smith (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1966), p. 248.
5. *Madras Mail*, October 30, 1918, quoted in Eugene Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 293. Dr. Irschick's chapter on "The Intellectual Background of Tamil Separatism" is excellent but deals with the period immediately preceding the rise of the DMK, and he seems to accept Nallaswami Pillai's judgment.
6. "But as far as I am concerned, and the Ṭirāvita Muṉṉeṟṟa Kaḻakam is concerned, even at the time we were with Periyar, the cinema *Veḷḷaikāri* was released. In that cinema Arinār Aṇṇa said, 'Only one God and only one community.' We have not changed from those ideas." M. Karunanidhi in a speech to the Rationalist Conference in Madras, May 27, 1972.
7. Karunanidhi added, "But definitely I do not complain against those who say, 'There is no God at all'." *Ibid.*
8. R.G. Krishnan, "Karunanidhi or M.G.R.," in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, November 19, 1972, p. 13.
9. Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikaḷār, Talk at Trichy Conference, (September 23, 1970), pp. 3-4.
10. Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikaḷār, "At Pathular", *Speeches in Ceylon*, (Madras, January 1968) p. 22.
11. A reference to the continuing Tamil "memory" of a lost continent, Lemuria, home of former *Sangams*, that has sunk beneath the sea.
12. Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikaḷār, *Speeches... op. cit.*, p. 24.
13. Robert Ingersoll, American free-thinker of the last century, who is greatly admired by the D.K.
14. Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikaḷār, *Appar Viruṇṭu (Appar's Feast)*, (Pannai, Madras 17 1970—First Edition), pp. 2-3.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 24

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 23, "Oh mean men
    Who talk elaborately about the Sastras.
    What can you do
    With your class and gotras?"
21. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
23. Interview, June 6, 1972.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
26. Kuṉṟakkuṭi used this in his February 27 speech. The translation is by R. Rangachari in *An Anthology of Indian Literatures*, ed. by K. Santhanam (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1969), p. 579.
27. Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikaḷār, *Speeches... op. cit.*, pp. 9ff.

11

THE LOTUS AND THE LINGAM : NOTES ON ŚAIVISM IN THAILAND

Donald Swearer

THAILAND is characterized as a Theravāda Buddhist country whose central religious institution or Sangha until recently has been relatively undisrupted by the impact of Western colonialism. Yet, as both historians of religion and anthropologists have noted, religious practice and doctrine in Thailand display a unique blend of religious traditions, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. The Indian Brahmanical or Hindu tradition forms an especially important ingredient in Thailand's religious history and culture. This paper will look briefly at selected aspects of this tradition with particular attention to Śaivism. It will be divided into three sections: historical, functional and structural. The historical sections will attempt to give some idea of the source and chronology of Śaivite influences in Thailand directly from South India and also mediated through Cambodia. What I have called the functional dimensions of Śaivism in Thailand refers to the place of Hindu deities and the role of Brahmanical ceremonies in Thai religion and will focus on the theme of functional complimentarity. The structural section from which the title derives focuses on cosmology and the conception of Thai kingship.

It was the presence of a Sumeru next to a *ceitya* (Thai: *cedi*) and sculpted lotuses appearing to be homologized with *lingas* within the compound of a temple I was studying which gave rise to this brief detour from the main thrust of my research on northern Thai Buddhism. As the title suggests, this study does not pretend to do justice either to the breadth and diversity of Hindu influences on Thai culture nor to the depth of that influence in any particular aspect of Thai religion. S.N. Desai's doctoral dissertation provides an opening into the breadth of that influence (*Hindu Elements in Thai Culture*, St. John's University, 1968), and references throughout the paper will point out areas where considerable work on particular areas has been done. It is my hope that the threefold historical, functional and structural analytical schema of this brief study will

provide further insight into the nature of Hindu/Śaivite influences in Thailand, and will, therefore, be of some use.

Hindu influence in Thailand of which Śaivism was one element is ancient, beginning as early as the first century A.D. This influence was particularly strong in the peninsula and lower Menam region and was both direct and indirect. Direct influence took the form of Indian settlements, indirect through the political dominance of these areas through the ancient Indianized kingdoms of Funan (mid-2nd to mid-6th centuries A.D.) and Śrivijaya (7th to 12th centuries A.D.). Later, during the Ayuthia period (1350-1767 A.D.) Hindu-Śaivite influence was mediated to the Thais primarily through the Khmer.

Briggs claims that Indian settlements existed before the Funan conquest in the early 2nd century A.D.[1] Pong Tük in Rājaburi province near the famous Mon/Dvaravati site of Nakorn Prathom was the home of a South Indian colony in the first and second centuries A.D. which flourished in the 6th century when it came under north Indian influences of Gupta origin.[2] Further south the peninsular region known in the Chinese chronicles as P'an-P'an also had Indian settlements, the most important being Takkola (modern Takuapā) cited in the *Milindapañho* on the west coast of the Isthmus of Kra.[3] Why did Indians, mostly of southern origin, settle in the peninsula? Scholars now generally agree that the reasons were primarily commercial rather than political or military. The area stretching from Jaiya (Bay of Bandon) on the east coast down through Nakorn Sithammarāt or Nagara Śri Dharmarāja (Ligor) to Songkhla (Singora), and on the west from Takuapā southward to Penang was an area rich in tin deposits. Of even greater significance, the Isthmus sat astride the sea lanes linking China with India and the Middle East. Favorite trans-peninsular routes seem to have been from Takuapā on the west by river and portage to the Bay of Bandon, Kedah to Pattani, and Kantan to Nakorn Sithammarāt.[4] A Tamil inscription from a later date (probably the 9th century) indicates the presence of Indian trading companies which may reflect but a later institutional development of an earlier less organized Indian interest in trade and commerce.[5] In summary, in this early period of the history of Thailand, roughly from the first to the seventh century A.D. evidence from Chinese chronicles and from archaeology supports the position that communities of south Indians occupied strategic points in lower Thailand

from Penang and Songkhla up to Pong Tük, and that their presence was motivated primarily by trade and commerce.

But what of the religious practice of these communities? In general it is said to have been a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism. The Mon area of the lower Menam valley provides evidence of the dominance of a Sanskrit Hinayāna Buddhism. Archaeological evidence also supports the presence of both Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas on the peninsula. Numerous *linga*-s of various sizes and materials have been discovered from Nakorn Prathom to Songkhla. At Si Chon north of Nakorn Sithammarāt four large, stone *lingas* would seem to indicate the existence of a large Śaiva sanctuary. The relatively naturalistic style of the *linga*-s parallel pre-ninth century types found in Cambodia. A small crystal *linga* from Si Chon from about the same period probably served as a votive object or was carried as an amulet. One scholar has suggested this may indicate the presence of a Viraśaiva sect as the Viraśaivas in India are known to have carried small *linga*-s for such purposes;[6] however, the Viraśaiva movement does not become formalised in South India until the twelfth century with the writing of the Kannada poet, Basavaṇṇa.

One of the most striking evidences of Śaivite worship is an *ekamukhalinga* with the head of Śiva on it discovered in Jaiya, an ancient Hindu-Buddhist settlement on the east coast. The anthropomorphic representation of Śiva has parallels with the pre-Angkorian art of Cambodia. The Jaiya *ekamukhalinga* is divided into the traditional parts stipulated by the Śiva *āgamas*, i.e. the base (*brahmabhāga*), middle section (*viṣṇubhāga*), and top (*rudrabhāga*). Stylistically it is somewhat more conventional than the famous Oc-Eo *ekamukhalinga* and, therefore, would probably be dated in the late 7th or early 8th century.[7]

Images of Śiva from the Pallava and pre-Pallava period are rarer than images of Viṣṇu. One of the best known is from the Takuapā area. A four-armed image, it was the largest and central figure of a trinity found near a Tamil inscription dedicating an irrigation tank. This inscription mentions a *maṇigraman* or merchantile guild, and the name of a monarch, Avanī-nārāyana, thought by scholars to be the Pallava King Nandivarman III (826-849).[8]

The weight of archaeological evidence would seem to point to a continuous, gradually indigenized Hindu presence from the 7th to the end of the 8th century, and that the breakup of Funan and the

expansion of Śrivajaya power in the peninsula saw a new infusion of Hindu, largely Śaivite, influence from South India.[9] This inference is based as much on assumption as on evidence but it does take into account both the broader political context of south Thailand as well as the difference in the styles of Brahmanical sculpture found on the peninsula.

In addition to Indian communities established from south India, Hinduism was also an important factor in the imperial culture of Funan, the dominating power on the peninsula for five centuries.[10] The two Kaundiyas who are reputed to have founded the first and second periods of Funanese power were Brahmans who implanted Śaivite rites which were certainly flourishing by the 5th century.[11] The Chinese chronicle of the Southern Ch'i states that during the reign of Jayavarman III " 'the custom of this area was to worship the god Maheśvara (Śiva). The god continually descends from Mount Motan'. This undoubtedly refers to the sacred mountain from which the kings and country itself got their name. Near the capital and marking the center of the kingdom, it was the place where the heavens communicated with the earth, which explains why 'the god continually descends' there. He was no doubt materialized there in the form of the *linga* of Śiva Giriśa."[12] Śaivism, we can conclude, was a factor not only on the level of popular worship but of imperial rule also. The contribution of Śaivism to the conception of the *devarāja* is of utmost significance in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia. We shall focus our attention on this problem later in the paper.

South Indian Śaivite influence in Thailand is clearly, though sporadically, apparent in the pre-Khmer period. It was a part of a syncretistic, religious milieu composed of Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Hinayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Although the Mon/Hinayāna of Dvaravati are justly seen as representing the dominant religious element in the early history of central and northeastern Thailand, the religiously eclectic nature of the area cannot be overlooked. This is especially the case in the southern peninsula region as we have tried to demonstrate. With the rise of the Khmer Empire (Jayavarman II, 802), however, Śaivite influence in Thailand takes on a new dimension. Now our attention shifts from its focus on the peninsula to northeast Thailand and the central plains (e.g. Lopburi) which was under Khmer domination from the early 11th century until the advent of a strong Thai kingdom at Ayudhya in the 13th century.

Even after the Thais had defeated the Khmers in the 15th century, Khmer-Buddhist-Śaiva conceptions of kingship and Khmer-Brahmanical notions of state and society were of great influence.

We need not go into detail about the nature of religious syncretism in Cambodia. Suffice it to say that the tenth and eleventh centuries saw a period of Śaiva development followed by Mahāyānist toleration and then Śaiva re-organization.[13] Vaiṣṇavism which flourished in India in the mid-12th century with the aid of Rāmānuja was strongly favored by Sūryavarman II (1111-1150). During his reign a synthesis between Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism obtained which, on the state level, saw a synthesis of the *devarāja* and *Viṣṇurāja* concepts. Buddhism enters into the synthesis in two principal ways. During the reign of Sūryavarman I a *Buddharāja* cult was built onto the Śaivite *devarāja* concept. This royal cult reached its peak during the reign of Jayavarman VII (1181-1201 A.D.), the builder of the Bayon, the central sanctuary of Angkor Thom. On the theological level Lokeśvara, the compassionate *bodhisattva* is effectively assimilated into the worship of Śiva as Maheśvara.[14] As the *Viṣṇurāja* and *Buddharāja* cults are rooted in the structure of the Śaivite notion of the *devarāja*, the Vaiṣṇava decorative motifs were added to Angkor Wat, the "summum bonum of Saivic architectural aspiration",[15] and the faces of Lokeśvara/Jayavarman VII dominate the Śaivic *prāsāts*, terraces and concentric galleries of the Bayon.

The syncretic nature of religion in Cambodia was reflected in Thailand as well. The so-called Lopburi period of Thai religious art (11-14th centuries) named after the city in central Thailand thought to have been occupied by a Khmer viceroy, reflects Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Hinayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Images in bronze and stone of Śiva, Umā, Viṣṇu, Prajñāpāramitā, and Hevājra are in abundance from this period. Śaivite temples were built in Lopburi and Sukhothai, the first Thai capital in central Thailand. Lopburi style temples, whether Buddhist or Hindu, are dominated by the Khmer tower (*prāsāt* or *prang*) reflecting the Brahmanical cosmological symbolism of Mt. Sumeru.[16] In Lopburi itself the two major temples, Wat Mahadhātu and Phra Prāng Sam Yot reflect the religious eclecticism of this period. Both are Khmer-Brahmanical in style, i.e. pyramidal structures dominated by the *prāsāt;* however, originally the former was Buddhist and the latter probably Hindu with its three towers symbolizing the Hindu trinity of Brahmā, Śiva, and Viṣṇu.[17] Other Hindu as well as Mahāyāna

(e.g. Pimai temples) from the Lopburi period could be cited. However, sufficient mention has been made to justify the point that Śaivite worship existed. Śaivism continued to play a role in South Thailand as the discovery of Śaivite images (e.g. Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Skanda) of Khmer style illustrate.[18] There was also a Śaivite Brahman priestly community in residence in Nakorn Sithammarāt by the 13th century as evidenced by the fact that the King of Sukhothai obtained court Brahmans from that city. Brahman temples and court Brahmans were also found in other early capitals and provincial centers.[19] As LeMay suggests, the common people probably followed the Buddhist faith while the royal court was surrounded by Brahman rites and ceremonies.[20]

During the Ayudhya Period (14th-18th centuries) and into the Bangkok Period (18th-present) Śaivism persisted. Śaivite priests formed part of the cadre of Royal Brahmans. Even today a small group of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava priests reside in the compound of the three Royal Brahman temples dedicated to Īśvara (Śiva), Gaṇeśa, and Narāyāna (Viṣṇu) and continue to play a ritual role in certain court and religious functions. (Some of the roles will be discussed below.) The main temple built in the 18th century is dedicated to Śiva and contains images of the Natarāja, Subramaṇya, Lakṣmi and Umā. In 1975 I spoke to one of the priests who said there were now fourteen Brahmans; that his ancestors originally came from Madras and had settled in Nakorn Sithammarāt; and that they had been brought to Ayudhya by King Rāmkamhaeng. Other modern Hindu temples are also found in the city of Bangkok which serve the Indian community resident there. The most active Śaivite temple is dedicated to Sri Mariamman (Umā) and is a sister temple to the large Sri Mariamman temple in Singapore established by Śaivas from Madras.

Having looked briefly at selected aspects of Śaivism in Thailand's religious history, we turn now to a more specific examination of the way in which Hinduism and Buddhism relate to each other in Thai religion. Except in certain instances it is difficult to distill Śaiva elements out of the rather vaguely synthesized Hindu/Brahmanical ingredient in Thai religion. We shall be concerned primarily with the problem of complementarity on both village and elite levels.

The student of Thai religion is struck by the fact the Hindu deities and Hindu/Brahmanical ceremonies are part of what is ordinarily thought of as Buddhism. For example, at the beginning

of many Buddhist ceremonies, including the sabbath service, the gods (*devatā*) as well as particular deities (e.g. Phra Narai [Narāyāna] Isuan [Śiva]) will be invoked by the monks to offer their protection and support to the ceremony about to be performed. With a similar intent, Hindu/Brahmanical rituals often precede such important Buddhist ceremonials as image consecrations and the presentation of robes at the end of the Rains Retreat period (*Kathin*). In Chiangmai, Thailand, in 1973 I witnessed such a ritual prior to a large image consecration ceremony in which one of the Brahmans from the Royal Brahmanical temple in Bangkok made offerings (both meat and vegetable) to the gods in a ritual performed in the compound of a Buddhist temple. In the invocation to Hindu deities at the beginning of Buddhist ceremonies as well as the enactment of Hindu/Brahmanical rituals in conjunction with such ceremonies, one is struck by the complementary nature of the relationship between the two traditions.

The relationship of functional and structural complementarity between Hinduism and Buddhism in the Theravāda countries of South and Southeast Asia has been studied by a number of scholars.[21] Unlike Sri Lanka where it is possible to structure a hierarchy of deities with the Buddha at the top,[22] in Thailand the relationship is more informal. As noted above, on ritual occasions the Hindu gods lurk in the background—much as they do in many Pāli texts—to protect, support and give honor to the Buddha. Or, they may enter into a mythic etiology explaining why, for example, the northern Thai long drum was struck through the night prior to the Buddhist sabbath.[23] The main point here is that the Hindu component, whether in myth or in ritual, performs a role that the Buddhism component cannot fulfil in such a way that it is subordinate to the normative ideology of Theravāda Buddhism. Such a pattern is not unique. Both Ames and Obeyesekere demonstrate the same point in regard to Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

The complementary role of Brahman and *bhikkhu* in northeastern Thailand has been studied by S.J. Tambiah. He argues that the role of these two religious actors in traditional India was antagonistic but that in Thailand became complementary.[24] He sees the two differentiated but not disparate or, in short, dynamically related. The Brahman (*paahm* in Tambiah's transliteration of the Thai) or 'spirit doctor' (*mau khwan*) is an elderly householder invested with an authority partially derived from the fact that in his youth he was

probably a *bhikkhu;* the monk is a young unmarried man undergoing an ascetical regimen. Ritually, Tambiah rightly sees the Brahman and the *bhikkhu* in a reciprocal relationship. Ordination into the monkhood in traditional Thai villages, especially in the north and northeast, dramatically illustrates this reciprocity.

The first or preliminary part of the ritual is a *sukhwan* or 'spirit calling' rite performed by the *paahm.* The *bhikkhu-sangha* then performs the ordination ceremony itself. A similar relationship between ritual actors occurs in other ceremonies as well, such as mortuary rites where the *paahm* or *mau khwan* conducts a spirit calling ceremony for the deceased prior to the chanting (and sermon) by the monks which focuses on the Buddhist teaching of the impermanent nature of sentient existence. Monk and 'priest' roles, therefore, dynamically interact. As Tambiah points out, these roles are related to the life-cycle and social structure of the village and, in this sense, are essentially interdependent. Yet, from a ritual point of view, the Brahmanical component is also distinct from the Buddhist component.

Court ritual performed by the royal Brahmans is, as we would expect, more specifically Brahmanical. Even on this level, however, complementarity between Hinduism and Buddhism exists. Thus, for example, the court Brahmans are also Buddhists, for "before they can undergo the ceremony of initiation and wear the Brahman girdle, they must pass through the novitiate as Buddhist monks."[25] Numerous rituals and festivals call for the leadership of the Brahman priests. Many have to do with State ceremonies and kingship rites; others are related to the agricultural calendar. Some are specifically Hindu, but others are fundamentally Buddhist. In a few festivals specifically Śaiva elements are readily discernible. We shall look in particular at the Swing Festival.

The festival of the Swing (Skt: Trīyambhavāy Trīpavāy), although no longer performed, was an important State ceremony in Bangkok and the former capitals of Ayudhya and Sukhothai as well as other chief cities in ancient times.[26] It celebrated the visit of Śiva to the earth for ten days during the first lunar month. Since the Thai view Śiva as a jovial god who likes to be amused, swinging and acrobatic feats were arranged for his entertainment. The deity—impersonated by a nobleman appointed by the king—was led from the Buddhist temple of Wat Rājapūrana to a giant swing which still stands in an area near the royal palace facing Wat Sutāt.

There the Brahmans attended him as he took his assigned place to watch the festivities. The swingers were in three sets, each with four men dressed as *nāgas*. A reward of money was placed in a purse tied to a bamboo pole erected to the side of the swing. After paying homage to Śiva, the swinging began. As the swing approached the pole, the man nearest the purse tried to snatch it with his mouth. Success was considered auspicious, while failure was a bad omen. The festival, traditionally extending over three days, included more swinging, colorful processions and dancing. The King participated as a spectator from a gallery in the Wat Sutāt compound. Rāmā IV, as an exceptionally devout Buddhist monarch, added Buddhist elements to make the event more compatible with his participation.

W.G. Quaritch Wales speculates that the Swing Festival was originally most probably a solar ceremony, a type of imitative magic intended to coerce the god Sūrya to fulfil his functions. He offers three arguments for this position: (1) the festival occurred about the time of the winter solstice, (2) the swinging was performed from east to west following the direction of the sun, (3) the circular dances following the swinging probably symbolized the revolution of the sun and its return to the southern hemisphere.[27] The festival became a Śaiva celebration and Śiva as Destroyer and Reproducer was then substituted for Sūrya. This change brought the occasion closer to a Hindu harvest festival. In this regard Wales observes that the Siamese Triyambavāy has some features in common with the Hindu Holi (Pongal) festival, especially as celebrated in those parts of south India where it takes place during the winter solstice.[28] The Śaiva transformation of the festival might also have meant that "when the kingship was elevated at the expense of the Brahmans, the king at an early period, perhaps before the ceremony reached Siam, swung himself in imitation of the deity he was held to represent."[29] The possibility of such a development leads us to our final discussion, Śaiva influence on the conception of the Thai monarchy.

Traditionally the Thai king was the center of the civil and cosmic order. "The main function of the king was...to constitute the central pinnacle—the bond between the divine and the human, around and below which the Thai civil order took form. The king was closely associated with the figure of Indra, the great God, who ruled in the heavenly realm which was located at the peak of Mount Meru, the central mountain of the Thai Buddhist cosmology. As Indra ruled and maintained the order of Dhamma in his domain, so

the Thai monarch was to rule and maintain the order of Dhamma in his earthly kingdom."[30] Two models influenced the development of this conception of kingship. One was the *cakkavattin* ideal, the mover of the Wheel of Dhamma, personified in the Theravāda chronicles by Aśoka Maurya. The other, and the most significant from the standpoint of this paper, is the *devarāja* conception developed in Cambodia. As previously noted, the concept probably originated during Funan times and was central to the Sailendra (Sumatra) view of monarchy as well. During the Khmer Dynasty it was given specific definition during the reign of Jayavarman II from 802 when Śaivism became the state cult. The central divinity of this cult was the king himself, looked upon as a manifestation of Śiva, hence, a god-king (*devarāja*), whose visible symbol was a *linga* set upon the central altar of a pyramidal temple, the symbolic center of the Empire, an imitation of Mount Meru.[31] Jayavarman made his *hotar* (royal chaplain), Śivakaivalya, as *purohita* or chief priest of the *devarāja* cult on a hereditary basis. This ensured continuance of the cult until the reign of Sūryavarman I the son of the king of Tāmbralinga (i.e. Ligor, Nakorn Sithammarāt) who added Mahāyāna Buddhism to state *devarāja* cult. It is known that he built a Buddhist central temple on the site later to become the Bayon, and it can be inferred that in the tradition of the *devarāja* he became a *Buddharāja*, an incarnate Buddha. Such was certainly the case during the reign of Jayavarman VII who, as the Bayon testifies, identified himself with Lokeśvara.

It may well be the case as W.G. Quaritch Wales and others speculate that the *devarāja* cult is synthesis of Indian/Śaivite ideas of divinity and kingship with older megalithic beliefs in Southeast Asia. When these peoples erected menhirs, they recognized the consubstantial presence of the first ancestor/earth god in the stone as themselves.[32] Wales finds corroboration of the chthonic character of Śiva among the Khmers in such epithets as Giriśa 'the mountain Lord' and Gambhireśvara, Śiva of the depths. He argues that the development of the temple mountain in Khmer architecture up to the Bayon points towards a displacing of the Hindu Meru by a more realistic and primordial representation of the sacred mountain which was a revival of the chthonic source of divine and real power.[33] These speculations on the chthonic origins of the Khmer god-king cult are fascinating; however, they are beyond the scope of this brief paper. For our purposes, the significance of the Khmer *devarāja*/

Buddharāja tradition is its impact on the Thai conception of monarchy, especially after the Thai defeated the Khmers in 1431 A.D.

The kings of Ayudhya found the Khmer theory of divine kingship useful for their own purposes. The Khmer court Brahmans who were brought to the Ayudhya court did not become a powerful class as had been the case in Cambodia; however, they did enhance the Thai kings' power and prestige. The concept of divine kingship was, of course, adapted to be compatible with Thai Buddhism. The Thai kings did not erect any *lingam* temple. Rather, they partook of divinity by occupying the sacred place (*prāsāt*) and through an elaborate coronation ceremony where the king was identified with Śiva and Viṣṇu who transferred to them their *śakti*.[34]

The coronation of the Thai king is described in great detail by W.G. Quaritch Wales.[35] The basic details of the coronation are Brahmanical/Hindu and include both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava elements. The high priest of Śiva traditionally played a crucial role. It was he who handed the king the Great Crown of Victory and the other regalia which formed the focal point of the ceremony. Also, at the conclusion of the coronation all the court Brahmans rendered homage to the King and the high priest of Śiva.[36] "The symbolism all through the ceremony of actual Coronation is... along the lines of an assumption that the chief deities, especially Śiva, are invited down to the earth to become merged in the person of the crowned King."[37] The same identification is symbolized in the Royal Tonsure Ceremony performed for the royal princes between their eleventh and thirteenth year. The ceremony takes place on a specially constructed Kailāsa mountain on the palace grounds. Kailāsa is the holy mountain of Lord Śiva and the Tonsure Ceremony symbolizes the mythical tonsure of his son, Gaṇeśa.[38] During the ceremony the king, dressed as Śiva, ascended the mountain followed by his son. There the prince undergoes purification rites and receives a jewelled coronet from Śiva, his father. In this way the prince receives his apotheosis from the god.

We began this essay with the casual observation that in the compound of a northern Thai temple a miniature Sumeru adjoins a *ceitya* and lotuses at the temple entrance appeared to be homologized with *lingas*. We have used this observation as the starting point for a discussion of some of the historical, functional and structural dimensions of Śaivism in Thailand. But what about the symbolism of the juxtaposition of the Sumeru and *ceitya* and the amalgamation

of the lotus and the *lingam*?

The Sumeru and the *ceitya* symbolize what Tambiah refers to as the dynamic differentiation with Thai religion. Hindu deities offer protection to Buddhist ceremonial occasions; *mau khwan* or *paahms* perform spirit rites as a preliminary to ordination into the Sangha; offerings are made at the Sumeru and the *ceitya* in hopes that the combined power of the *devatā* and the Buddha can secure a better rebirth. As for the lotus and the *lingam*, both are symbols of creative power and are aptly homologized into the structure of Thai religion just as the concepts of *chakkavattin* and *devarāja* were uniquely integrated into the conception of Thai kingship.

The subject of Śaivism in Thailand is, indeed, complex. It has its obvious and overt expressions such as the irrefutable presence of Śaiva worship in Indian communities in south Thailand, or the celebration of Śivarātri in the compound of the Royal Brahman temple in Bangkok. However, as we have seen, its presence in Thai religious culture as an aspect of the Hindu/Brahmanical component of Thai religion is also more subtle and undifferentiated. This essay has attempted to suggest only a few dimensions of this subject and some of the problems in interpretation.

Notes

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3. George Coedes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, trans. S.B. Cowing (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968), p. 39.
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18. 18. S.J. O'Connor, "Tāmbralinga and the Khmer Empire," *JSS* LXIII, Pt. 1 (1975).
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21. See Michael Ames, "Magical-animism and Buddhism: A Structural Analysis of the Sinhalese Religious System", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, XXIII (1964), pp. 21-52; Gananath Obeyesekere, "The Buddhist Pantheon in Ceylon and Its Extensions", *Anthropological Studies in Theravada Buddhism*, ed. Manning Nash (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, 1966), pp. 1-27: Stanley J. Tambiah, *Buddhism and Spirit Cults in North-East Thailand* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1970).
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24. S.J. Tambiah, *Buddhism and Spirit Cults...*, p. 255.
25. H.G. Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, p. 57.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
30. Frank Reynolds, "Sacral Kingship and National Development, the Case of Thailand," *Tradition and Change in Theravada Buddhism*, Bardwell L. Smith, ed., Contributions to Asian Studies, Vol. 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), p. 41.
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32. H.G. Quaritch Wales, *The Making of Greater India*, p. 188.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
34. Santosh N. Desai, *Hindu Elements in Thai Culture*, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1969), p. 72.
35. *See* H.G. Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, chs. 6-8.
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CONTRIBUTORS

V.A. Devasenapathy is Professor Emeritus and former director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Philosophy at the University of Madras. He has been the editor of *Śaiva Siddhānta* and of the *Journal of the Madras University* (*Humanities Section*). His publications include *Of Human Bondage and Divine Grace: The Mysticism of Nammalvar*; and *The Kandar Alankaram*, in addition to several works and translations in Tamil, including *Meyyaḷīyārkal* and *India Tattuva Varaḻāru*.

Glenn Yocum (PhD, University of Pennsylvania) is Associate Professor of Religion at Whittier College. His major research interest is Tamil Śaivism, particularly the devotional poetry found in the Śaiva *Tirumuṟai*. He has co-edited with Harry M. Buck *Structural Approaches to South India Studies*, a volume of essays to which he also contributed. He has also contributed articles to the *History of Religions* and the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. He has co-edited with G.R. Welbon, *Religious Festivals in South India and Sri Lanka* (Manohar, 1982) and authored *Hymns to a Dancing Śiva* (Heritage, 1982).

Lucetta Mowry is a Professor Emeritus of Wellesley College where she has been Acting Dean and the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in Humanities of Religion and Biblical Studies. Her research and teaching interests are broad and include Biblical Studies and the religious life of India. She has been collaborating with Professor Devasenapathy on an extensive study in Śaivism, yet to be published. She has done research in India on three occasions, most recently in 1970 with the help of AAUW and Mayling Soong Grants. She has published several articles on the New Testament and on Māṇikkavācakar and one book: *The Dead Sea Scrolls and The Early Church* (Chicago: 1962).

David C. Buck received his BA from Oberlin College in 1970. He has spent some three years in India studying Tamil and *vīṇa*, the last two years as a grantee of the Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association and the Thomas J. Watson Foundation. His translation, with comments, of the song of Pāmpāṭṭi-Cittar, entitled *dance snake! dance!* has been published by the Writers Workshop in Calcutta. He has also contributed to *Structural Approaches to*

South Indian Studies and *Anima*. He is currently living on his farm in Kentucky, where he is engaged in translating poetic works from Tamil into English. His new translation of Subramania Bharati's *Kuyiṟ-Pāṭṭu* is nearly completed.

Jean Filliozat is Professeur au College de France d'Extreme-Orient in Paris and former director of the Institut Français d'Indologie in Pondichèry. Among other responsibilities, he has served as president of the International Association of Dravidian Studies. His publications include *La Légende de Skanda* (1967), a translation of the *Skanda Purāṇa; Un texte de la religion Kaumāra le Tirumurukkāṟṟupaṭai*, a translation with notes of the *Tirumurukkāṟṟupaṭai*, (1973); *Les relations exterieures de l'Inde* (1956); *Un catechisme tamoul du XVIe siecle en lettres latines*, (1967); and *Un texte tamoul de dèvotion vishnouite, le Tirruppāvai d'Antāl* (1972).

J.V. William Curtis is Associate Professor in the Department of Architecture of the University of Washington. A practicing architect, as well as a scholar, he has designed buildings and created sculptures which have become a permanent part of the landscape of Western Washington. He was a fellow of The American Institute of Indian Studies in 1971-72, after which he has written a number of essays in comparative architecture and published the volume *Motivations of Temple Architecture in Śaiva Siddhānta in* 1972.

J. Bruce Long is director of the Blaisdell Institute for the Study of World Cultures and Religions in Claremont, California. After receiving a PhD from the University of Chicago in History of Religions, he taught at Haverford College and Cornell University. He has contributed a number of essays on Śaivism to various volumes and has published *The Mahābhārata: A Select Annotated Bibliography* in 1974.

Fred W. Clothey is Associate Professor and Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. His MA (1965) and PhD (1968) is in the History of Religions from the University of Chicago. He was in India in 1966-67 and 1981 as a fellow of the American Institute of Indian Studies; in 1971-72 as a co-ordinator of the Program of the GLCA year in India; and in 1978 and 1982 as a Fulbright Research Fellow. He has published *The Many Faces of Murukaṉ: The History and Meaning of a South Indian God* (Mouton, 1978), and produced three films on the festival experience in South India. He has authored *Quiescence and Passion: The Vision of Aruṇakiri, Tamil Mystic* (Madurai, 1982) and

Rhythm and Intent: Ritual Studies from South India (Blackie, 1982). He is the editor of *Images of Man: Religion and Historical Process in South Asia* (New Era Publications, 1982).

David Lorenzen is Associate Professor in the Department of South Asian Studies in El Colegio de Mexico, Guanajuato, Mexico, where he has been teaching since receiving his PhD from the Australian National University. Among his responsibilities in recent years was hosting and co-ordinating parts of the XXX Congress of the Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa in 1976. His publications include *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas* (California: 1972).

Charles Ryerson is Assistant Professor in History of Religion at Princeton Theological Seminary. He received his PhD in the Sociology of Religion from Columbia University. He has spent several years teaching and researching in Tamil Nadu, first as an Oberlin Shansi Fellow from 1961-64 and later as an Overseas Fellow (1970-72). He has published a number of essays on the contemporary religion and politics of Tamil India.

Donald Swearer is a Professor in the Department of Religion, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, USA. His principal research field is Theravāda Buddhism, especially in Thailand. He has published articles and books on the philosophy, ethics, history, and contemporary institutional practice of Buddhism. His books include *Buddhism in Transition* (1970); *Secrets of the Lotus: Studies in Buddhist Meditation* (1971); *Wat Haripuñjaya: The Royal Temple of the Buddha's Relic, Lamphun, Thailand* (1976); and *Dialogue: The Key to Understanding Other Religions* (1977).

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Fred W. Clothey is Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh.
Among his publications are *Rhythm and Intent. Ritual Studies from South India* (Madras, Blackie and Sons, 1982); *Quiescence and Passion: The Vision of Arunakiri; Tamil Mystic* (Madurai Kamaraj University, 1982); and *The Many Faces of Murukan: The History and Meaning of a South Indian God* (Mouton and Co., 1982). He has produced four films on Hindu ritual and has edited *Images of Man: Religion and Historical Process in South Asia* (Madras: New Era Publications, 1982).

J. Bruce Long is Director of the Blaisdell Institute for Advanced Study in World Cultures and Religions in Claremont, California. Among his most recent publications are, "The Concepts of Human Action and Rebirth in the *Mahabharata* in *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, edited by Wendy D. O'Flaherty (University of California Press, 1980) and *The Mahabharata; An Annotated Bibliography* (South Asia Occasional Papers and Theses, Cornell University).

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